

Madam Chair, and members of the Minnesota Senate Education Policy Committee,

My name is Maitreya Reeder. I am a junior at St. Anthony Village High School, and I currently serve as the 45th Minnesota Youth Secretary of State and a 2025 National Youth Advocate. I am also a participant in the Catalyst for Systems Change (CSC) Changemakers program, where I helped develop this bill and have spent the last four months researching, lobbying, and gathering support. I would like to express my overwhelming belief in the inclusion of overdose prevention and response in the Minnesota Health Education Standards for many reasons.

Drug overdose is the current leading cause of accidental death in the US, taking over 100,000 lives per year according to the CDC. More than 80,000 of those deaths included an opioid. Opioid overdoses kill around 900-1,000 people per year in Minnesota according to 2023 statistics from the Minnesota Department of Health. However, research from the CDC shows that bystanders are present in more than one in three opioid overdoses, training would allow them to know administration procedures and increase incentives for the carrying of emergency naloxone. If bystanders were educated on the administration of naloxone, countless lives could be saved.

All school districts in Minnesota are required to meet standards for health curriculum, including mandated CPR and AED training, provided by a qualified staff member or first responder. According to research presented at an American Heart Association Conference and reported in Science Daily, CPR education in schools has been shown to link to higher survival rates in cardiac arrest emergencies. Research shows that 41.3% of people suffering out-of-hospital cardiac arrest were treated by a bystander in states that require CPR and AED training in high schools, versus only 36.1% of people treated in states that do not have this training. This shows that when training for lifesaving measures is implemented in schools, their goal of reducing related deaths is successful.

If overdose prevention and response education are inserted into curriculums, we will see a definite increase in lives saved due to more educated and prepared generations. Measures to protect the population from the dangers of fentanyl have not proven to be overwhelmingly successful, so educating students in emergency measures can be extremely valuable. As a society, one of our greatest resources is the work and motivations of our youth. This act will use that work and motivation to ensure a safer population in Minnesota. To ensure the protection and education of Minnesotans, I urge you to support this bill.

Maitreya Reeder