To members of the Minnesota Senate Education Policy Committee,

My name is Dr. Robert Shumer and I am writing in support of the student recommendation that you include language affecting youth dealing with "overdose recognition, prevention, and response education." As someone who has been involved in the service-learning and youth civic education movement in Minnesota and the US for more than 40 years, it is critical to include the voices of community members in all remedies dealing with social problems. In this case, youth are the key members of this community, and their voices should be heard and acknowledged.

From a service-learning perspective, it is important to include youth programs that help young people to learn about the causes and treatments for overdose and addition, and more importantly, involve them in the implementation of programs that engage in the education and response efforts so that they can have an important impact on addressing this critical problem for youth. Clearly, since they are the very youth who can be impacted, they are the closest to bringing about real solutions to the problem. It is important to provide them with the education necessary to make a serious impact on the problem.

By supporting programs that engage youth in addressing this issue you do what the research suggests is most effective in dealing with social problems for young people. Arming young people with the research, knowledge, and programs to address this issue is perhaps one of the most cost-effective ways of creating long-term solutions to the problem.

Minnesota is very lucky to have the people, resources, and organizations that can assist with this issue. I'm sure, once you pass legislation addressing this issue, that you will see remarkable results in dealing with the overdose/drug addiction problem. Thank you for your willingness to take the steps necessary to involve young people in solutions to their own problems.

Sincerely,

Robert Shumer, Ph.D

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