



February 18, 2025

The Honorable Omar Fateh
Senate Committee on Higher Education
Room G-15
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: SF.164

Dear Chairman Omar Fateh and Higher Education Committee members:

The National Safety Council (NSC) and Minnesota Safety Council respectfully ask you to support SF.164, a bill that would require public post-secondary institutions in Minnesota to maintain a supply of opioid antagonists on campuses. With the number of workplace overdose deaths on the rise, opioid overdose reversal medication is now an essential component of emergency response preparedness.

NSC is America's leading nonprofit safety advocate and has been for over 110 years. As a mission-based organization, we work to eliminate the leading causes of preventable death and injury, focusing our efforts on the workplace and roadway. We create a culture of safety to keep people safer in the workplace and beyond so they can live their fullest lives. Suggestion for readability: Our 13,000+ member companies represent employees at nearly 41,000 U.S. worksites, including over 130 members in Minnesota.

According to most recent data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, approximately 82,000 people died of an opioid overdose in 2022.¹ No industry or occupation is immune to this crisis, and workplace overdose deaths have increased over 600% since 2011.² Nationally, overdose deaths now account for nearly 1 in 10 worker deaths on the job.³ Additionally, recent data from the National Emergency Medical Services Information System show emergency medical services (EMS) personnel responded to over 42,000 non-fatal suspected cases of opioid overdose at workplaces in 2022.⁴ During these emergency responses, EMS personnel used naloxone 66% of the time to reverse a suspected opioid overdose.⁵

Opioid overdose reversal medications, such as naloxone, are safe, effective, and can save a life. To date, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has approved two over-the-counter versions of opioid overdose reversal medications, making them easier to obtain by individuals and organizations. These medications can be easily administered and temporarily reverse overdoses from licit and illicit opioids; they are non-habit forming and are not harmful to people when administered.⁶ The adoption of over-the-

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/overdose-prevention/about/understanding-the-opioid-overdose-epidemic.html>

² <https://injuryfacts.nsc.org/work/safety-topics/overdose-deaths>

³ Ibid.

⁴ <https://www.cdc.gov/stopoverdose/naloxone/index.html>

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.



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counter status for naloxone nasal sprays gives the people of Minnesota a useful tool to combat the growing threat of opioid overdoses and should be more widely deployed.

In addition to opioid antagonist obtention, this legislation would task the Commissioner of Health with identifying resources, including training videos, to assist institutions in establishing an opioid antagonist emergency response. NSC's [Respond Ready Workplace](#) program was created to help employers address overdose deaths at work by supporting access to naloxone in addition to providing training and resources, including a naloxone administration eLearning that is free and available to all workplaces.

Including these medications on public post-secondary campuses – either in a first aid kit or elsewhere – and training employees to use it is a critical component of emergency response to help save a life. The National and Minnesota Safety Councils support ready access to opioid antagonists in all organizations including educational settings. Anyone at a workplace, including workers, clients, customers and visitors, is at risk of overdosing if using opioids. Many public and private organizations have already incorporated overdose response into their emergency plans, either because of their own experience or in response to the Governor's Executive Order in October 2024.

Overdose response is one part of the larger effort to address impairment across Minnesota, including free awareness training available to all Minnesota businesses through the Minnesota Safety Council. This movement reflects a growing recognition of the workplace as a critical setting for harm reduction efforts and demonstrates a commitment to protecting public health and safety. We encourage Minnesota to follow suit and help combat the overdose crisis by ensuring first aid kits in the state are appropriately equipped to respond to such an emergency.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. If you have any questions, or if NSC can be of further assistance on this issue, please contact State Government Affairs Manager Alaina Dahlquist at Alaina.Dahlquist@nsc.org or Minnesota Safety Council CEO Paul Aasen at paul.aasen@mnscc.org.

Sincerely,

Lorraine M. Martin
President and CEO
National Safety Council

Paul Aasen
CEO
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cc: Senator Bill Weber (MN-21)