



PROTECTING, MAINTAINING AND IMPROVING THE HEALTH OF ALL MINNESOTANS

January 17, 2017

Senator Michelle Benson
Chair, Health & Human Services Policy & Finance
Minnesota Senate Building, Room 3109
95 University Avenue W.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Representative Matt Dean
Chair, Health & Human Services Finance
State Office Building, Room 401
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Senator Warren Limmer
Chair, Judiciary & Public Safety Policy & Finance
Minnesota Senate Building, Room 3221
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Representative Joe Schomacker
Chair, Health & Human Services Reform
State Office Building, Room 509
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Representative Tony Cornish
Chair, Public Safety & Security Policy & Finance
State Office Building, Room 365
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St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Members of the Legislature:

In accordance with Minnesota Statutes, section 152.27, subdivision 2, paragraph (b), I am providing formal notice of my decision to add Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) as a qualifying condition for Minnesota's medical cannabis program. I have also decided to allow Minnesota's manufacturers to develop and provide topical formulations of medical cannabis. This could include patches, creams, lotions, gels, and ointments.

My decision to add PTSD as a qualifying condition was made after careful deliberation of available evidence, consultation with experts in the field and public input. While the process of reviewing these potential additions was difficult due to the relative lack of published scientific evidence, PTSD presented the strongest case for potential benefits. PTSD also has few effective treatment alternatives available for some patients with the condition. The addition of topical formulations is based on evidence suggesting patches, lotions, creams, gels and ointments could offer a safe, effective and low-risk method for providing medical cannabis in known dosage to qualified patients.

Throughout June and July, Minnesotans were invited to submit petitions to add qualifying conditions or approved forms of medical cannabis following a process laid out in Minnesota

Rules. MDH received petitions for nine new qualifying conditions and petitions for new delivery methods, including topical applications, edibles, and whole plant vaporization. The review process included nearly 50 public comments, a citizens' review panel, and a set of research summaries for each condition prepared by MDH staff.

The decisions to approve PTSD was not an easy one. I considered the wide range of views on the issue and weighed the need for a public health decision without the benefit of an abundance of solid, scientific evidence about the benefits and risks of medical cannabis. Given the strong medical focus of Minnesota's medical cannabis program, the compelling testimony of many Minnesotans, and the views of people around the state and country with whom I consulted, I determined that adding PTSD was the correct decision. Likewise, approving medical cannabis in topical forms will allow new delivery option for patients who are still suffering in a form that is used medical in other contexts and can be distinguished from cannabis that is not part of the medical cannabis program. In accordance with Minnesota Statutes, section 152.27, subdivision 2, paragraph (b), these changes shall be effective on August 1, 2017, unless the legislature by law provides otherwise.

I would be happy to discuss my decisions with you and answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Edward P. Ehlinger". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Edward P. Ehlinger, MD, MSPH
Commissioner
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