

HOUSE RESEARCH

Bill Summary

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Authors: Hamilton and others

Subject: Spinal Cord and Traumatic Brain Injury Research Grants

Analyst: Matt Gehring, 651-296-5052

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Overview

This bill establishes a grant program, and a separate small business grant and loan program, to fund research into spinal cord injuries and traumatic brain injuries. These program are to be administered by the commissioner of higher education, in consultation with a new advisory council that is established by the bill to assist the commissioner with this work.

An appropriation is provided.

Section

1 Spinal cord injury and traumatic brain injury research grant program. Establishes a grant program (subdivision 1), and a separate small business grant and loan program (subdivision 2), to fund research into spinal cord injuries and traumatic brain injuries. Forty percent of the available funds are to be used for research involving spinal cord injuries; 40 percent are to be used for research involving traumatic brain injuries, and 20 percent are for small business grants and loans for phase I and phase II research into these conditions. A “small business” is a business, including affiliates, with no more than 500 employees.

Additional detail on the types of research that may be conducted is provided in the bill.

This section also requires a report to the legislature, beginning January 15, 2016, and annually thereafter, specifying the institutions receiving grant funds, and the purposes for which the funds were used (subdivision 3).

Section

- 2** **Spinal cord and traumatic brain injury advisory council.** Establishes an advisory council to assist the commissioner of higher education in awarding grants under section 1. The advisory council is responsible for developing criteria for evaluating and making research grant awards, and reviewing proposals and making recommendations to the commissioner (subdivision 6).

The advisory council consists of 12 members, appointed by the commissioner of higher education, who must represent specific entities or areas of expertise, as detailed in subdivision 1. Members of the advisory council serve two-year staggered terms, and are otherwise subject to the general existing laws governing the establishment of advisory councils in Minnesota Statutes, chapter 15, including payment and expense reimbursement, and procedures for removal of a member. Appointees must be named no later than September 1, 2015, with an initial meeting of the advisory council no later than November 1, 2015 (subdivisions 1-4).

Council members are required to disclose, in writing, any financial interest in an organization that the council recommends for a grant and describe the nature of the conflict.

- 3** **Appropriation.** Provides an appropriation for making grants required by this section. The amount of the appropriation that may be used to administer the grant program is limited.

In the introduced version of the bill, the exact appropriation amounts are left blank.