



April 11, 2018

House HHS Finance Committee
State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55119

Dear Chair Dean and Committee Members:

The Minnesota Medical Association (MMA) is the professional association representing physicians, residents, and medical students. With more than 10,000 members, the MMA is dedicated to making Minnesota the healthiest state in the nation.

As an organization that is devoted to making Minnesotans the healthiest in the nation, we strongly support Representative Anselmo's HF 3291, which would provide dedicated funding to effective, science-based tobacco cessation services. Put simply, cessation services save lives and money. We support this bill because swift legislative action is needed to ensure that all Minnesotans have access to free quit-smoking services when QUITPLAN® Services ends in early 2020.

Tobacco use remains the single most preventable cause of death and disease, and more must be done to help addicted tobacco users quit. Tobacco kills more than half its users and in Minnesota, more than 6,300 residents die each year from tobacco use. Tobacco's toll on our health and economy is devastating – costing an estimated \$7 billion every year. That total includes more than \$3 billion in excess health care costs and \$4 billion in lost productivity.

Our organization also supports this bill because Minnesota physicians need a trustworthy, state-wide resource to refer patients who are trying to quit smoking and tobacco use. The MMA aims to give physicians and their staff all the tools they need to be successful, with the goal of making Minnesota the best state in which to practice medicine. Every other state in the nation funds tobacco cessation services and if the Legislature fails to take action, Minnesota will become the only state without these services. Our state should not earn this dishonorable distinction.

Helping smokers quit is not only the right thing to do, it is also one of the most cost-effective health investments we can make. Research finds that smoking cessation services, including counseling and medication support, can more than triple the chances of a person successfully quitting. For every dollar invested by Minnesota in counseling and nicotine replacement therapy, \$1.29 would be saved annually.

Thank you for carefully considering this important proposal to improve Minnesota's health, save scarce health care resources, and invest this life-saving resource.

George Schoephoerster, MD
President
Minnesota Medical Association