



Association of Minnesota Counties

February 19, 2019

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Re: HF 400 – Comprehensive Approach to Reversing the Opioid Epidemic

Dear Members of the House Judiciary and Civil Law Division:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on HF 400 and thank you to this committee for considering such an important issue. **Minnesota's 87 counties are pleased to support a statewide comprehensive approach to reverse the opioid epidemic.**

We appreciate the leadership from Rep. Liz Olson and Rep. Dave Baker on this comprehensive legislation. Just as we know that there are numerous factors that contribute to substance use disorder, we also know that fighting addiction in our communities must be rooted in a comprehensive approach.

For the state's 87 counties, opioids and substance abuse is a serious threat to communities. Counties are on the front lines when it comes to responding to addiction. Opioid and substance abuse continues to plague our communities and county leaders appreciate direct funding to counties to help respond. Some of the most significant human and financial tolls are in children and family services; parental drug use is the primary factor for out-of-home placements statewide.

However, responding to addiction in our communities touches nearly every area of county government, including other areas of human services, our courts, jails, clinics, and emergency response.

Finally, we thank the author for including in the advisory committee, a member representing a local health department. We believe the public health perspective is critical for the work of this advisory council. In addition to having expertise to apply an evidence-based, multi-disciplinary, collaborative approach to the work, having a representative from local government helps inform the council on local challenges and strategies.

Thank you again for the opportunity to share comments on this legislation. We look forward to continuing to find ways to better address opioid and substance use.

Sincerely,



Julie Ring, Executive Director
Association of Minnesota Counties