



Monday, March 17, 2025

Dear Madame Chair and Members of the Minnesota House Judiciary Finance and Civil Law Committee,

On behalf of the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation, I am writing to express our strong support for House File 1379, legislation that would authorize the use of nonopioid directives in Minnesota. We commend Representative Dave Baker for his leadership in authoring this bill, as well as co-authors Representatives Bierman, Gillman, Virnig, Backer, Elkins, Bahner, and Perryman, whose bipartisan collaboration highlights the urgency of addressing opioid use and its devastating effects.

As the nation's leading nonprofit provider of addiction treatment, Hazelden Betty Ford has been at the forefront of combating substance use disorders for over seven decades. With multiple locations across Minnesota, we have seen firsthand the impact of opioid addiction on individuals, families, and communities. Our expertise in evidence-based treatment and prevention strategies reinforces our belief that HF1379 is a critical step forward in empowering patients and reducing unnecessary exposure to opioids.

HF1379 establishes a formal mechanism for patients to refuse opioid medications through nonopioid directives. The Minnesota Department of Health would develop a standardized form that patients can complete and have entered into their medical records, indicating that they do not wish to be administered opioids unless medically necessary in a provider's best judgment. This bill is about patient autonomy—giving individuals control over their pain management choices without requiring them to repeatedly justify their decision, disclose personal recovery status, or navigate unnecessary explanations with each medical encounter.

One of the most important effects of HF1379, if implemented effectively, will be its role in reducing the stigma and shame often associated with substance use disorder. By allowing individuals to make proactive healthcare decisions without having to repeatedly disclose their recovery status, this bill fosters dignity and autonomy in patient care.

We urge the committee to advance HF1379 and appreciate your dedication to addressing the opioid crisis in Minnesota. The Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation stands ready to collaborate on efforts that promote safer pain management practices and enhance substance use prevention statewide.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to improving public health.

Sincerely,

Alta DeRoo, MD, MBA, DFASAM, FACOG  
Chief Medical Officer  
Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation