



Thursday, March 1st, 2018

Dear Members of the Health and Human Services Reform Committee,

On behalf of thousands of Americans for Prosperity activists across Minnesota, I am writing today to urge you to vote “No” on HF1440 when it comes before the Health and Human Services Reform Committee today. This bill would fund response programs by placing an additional per pill tax burden onto patients already struggling with increased health care costs.

There is no question that the ongoing opioid crisis demands a serious response from key institutions across our society, but this bill is not the correct way for the government to go about doing so. For years, the Minnesota Legislature has worked to address rising health care costs. In fact, removing unnecessary government-imposed costs from the health care system was the justification rightfully used to repeal the provider tax.

This bill would only make it harder for those afflicted with acute and chronic pain to receive the help they need and deserve. We do not believe you should make it harder for patients who legitimately need these drugs by adding an estimated \$5-\$8 per 30-dosage pill prescription.

Thankfully, there are numerous options available to fund worthy opioid abuse prevention and enforcement programs. For example, under the federal Medicaid Drug Rebate Program, pharmaceutical manufacturers last year alone paid over \$250 million into the Minnesota’s general fund. These rebate funds could provide an ongoing and dedicated source of funding to address a problem that demands long term attention. In addition, billions of dollars of federal funds are already being spent to combat the opioid epidemic, and the budget deal just passed by Congress includes over \$6 billion in new federal funds, some of which will soon be flowing to the state – in addition to charitable and private sector efforts.

Lawmakers should prioritize the funds the Legislature already has at its disposal – and prioritize the needs of our citizens who depend on these drugs as a tool on their road to recovery. Our state is already collecting more revenue than projected. We should not go backwards to arbitrarily driving up health care costs, no matter how well-intentioned the rationale.

It is our hope that this committee will reject this tax increase on patients and their families and focus instead on limiting availability and potential for abuse of both prescription opioids and other illegal forms of the drugs.

Sincerely,

Jason Flohrs
State Director - Minnesota
Americans for Prosperity

Americans for Prosperity (AFP) exists to recruit, educate, and mobilize citizens in support of the policies and goals of a free society at the local, state, and federal level, helping every American live their dream – especially the least fortunate. AFP has more than 3.2 million activists across the nation, a local infrastructure that includes 36 state chapters, and has received financial support from more than 100,000 Americans in all 50 states. For more information, visit www.AmericansForProsperity.org.