



April 7, 2026

Chair Chowdhury - Committee of the Whole  
350 S. Fifth St., #370  
Minneapolis, MN 55415

Chair Chowdhury, Vice Chair Chugtai, and Committee of the Whole Members,

I am writing on behalf of Impact MN, a state-wide, cross-sector coalition promoting health-based approaches to drug use in Minnesota. Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments in support of Ordinance 2026-00096, which would decriminalize drug paraphernalia in the City of Minneapolis.

In 2023, Minnesota became the first state in the country to remove most penalties associated with drug paraphernalia possession. Lawmakers recognized that this was a practical, evidence-based policy change that would strengthen both public health and public safety by reducing overdose risks, preventing disease, and lessening litter and other community impacts. However, the state law still allows local municipalities and counties to maintain or adopt ordinances criminalizing drug paraphernalia which has led to uneven implementation across the state.

The proposed Minneapolis ordinance would bring the city into alignment with state policy and public health goals. Experience has shown that harsh penalties for drug use and paraphernalia do not help people and only worsen the tragic overdose crisis. Tougher laws push people toward unsafe practices and illicit markets, resulting in preventable disease and overdose. These increased risks are particularly prevalent among low-income communities and communities of color.

Early outcomes of decriminalizing drug paraphernalia reinforce these findings. Since the 2023 policy change took effect, communities report cleaner public spaces as people safely dispose of items. Service providers have reached more racially and geographically diverse populations by offering safer materials for use and disposal. Participants in syringe service programs — where updated paraphernalia laws improved engagement — are five times more likely to enter treatment and three times more likely to stop using drugs than those without access to such services.

However, without changing Minneapolis' city ordinance to decriminalize drug paraphernalia, this success can only go so far. The city's ordinance still criminalizes drug paraphernalia, and charges have continued to rise. Between 2023 and November 2025, we've seen 1,160 cases for drug paraphernalia possession, not counting stops or arrests, which is likely much higher. These persistent charges slow efforts to reduce overdoses, prevent disease and improve safety in public spaces. Removing criminal penalties for drug paraphernalia would give individuals and service providers more viable ways to minimize harm and connect people to help, rather than deepening their involvement with the criminal system.



While long-term outcomes are still emerging, the impact is already clear: removing penalties for paraphernalia possession helps shift the response to substance use from punishment toward practical solutions that save lives, reduce disease, and promote recovery.

This proposal also aligns with recommendations from Minnesota’s Task Force on Holistic and Effective Responses to Illicit Drug Use which endorsed further closing loopholes in paraphernalia laws with overwhelming support (83%). The Task Force’s membership – including the Minnesota Medical Association and medical professionals, County Social Service Administrators, Indian Affairs Council, law enforcement representatives, and criminal justice reform representatives – reflects broad consensus across systems and sectors.

To strengthen the ordinance, we encourage the Council to consider:

- Ensuring full alignment with state law by defining “drug paraphernalia” broadly, so that all equipment and materials used to manufacture or consume a substance are covered — avoiding lists of examples that could leave some items criminalized.
- Clarifying that the presence of a residual amount of a controlled substance within paraphernalia does not constitute probable cause for a violation (Minneapolis Ordinance 223.220).

Impact MN strongly supports the Minneapolis City Ordinance 2026-00096. Removing criminal penalties for drug paraphernalia is an essential next step toward a practical, equitable, and health-focused response to substance use.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Arielle McHenry, MPH  
Coalition Administrator, Impact MN  
[ari@impactmn.org](mailto:ari@impactmn.org)

CC: Members of the Committee of the Whole

**From:** [Katy Vermeer](#)  
**To:** [Council Comment](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]  
**Date:** Monday, April 6, 2026 8:25:44 PM

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You don't often get email from [katyvermeer@gmail.com](mailto:katyvermeer@gmail.com). [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Mayor Frey and Members of the City Council,

I am writing as a concerned Uptown resident regarding the proposed ordinance to remove local restrictions on drug paraphernalia, including in public spaces.

I strongly support public health approaches to addiction and believe in treating people with dignity and respect. However, I also believe that effective policy must balance compassion with accountability.

We have seen similar approaches tested in places like Oregon under Measure 110. While well-intentioned, the lack of structured accountability led to low engagement with treatment and growing challenges in public spaces. In response, Oregon has since revised its approach to reintroduce accountability while also expanding pathways to treatment through deflection programs.

In Uptown, many of the current challenges are being driven by a small number of repeat offenders whose behavior is impacting residents, workers, and small businesses. Policies that remove tools for intervention risk allowing these patterns to continue unchecked.

I urge you to consider a more balanced approach, one that supports access to treatment while maintaining the ability to intervene in situations where behavior is harming the broader community.

Compassion and accountability are not opposites. We need both to create meaningful, lasting change so that Uptown is once again a place where city residents feel safe and can enjoy the Walker library, restaurants and shops.

Thank you for your service to our city.

Sincerely,

**Katy Vermeer**  
**East Bde Maka Ska resident**  
**612 270-5243**

[EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the City of Minneapolis. Please exercise caution when opening links or attachments.

**From:** [Jeanette Colby](#)  
**To:** [Council Comment](#); [Frey, Jacob \(he/him/his\)](#); [Payne, Elliott](#); [Ward 2](#); [Ward 3](#); [Ward 4](#); [Warren, Pearl Y](#); [Osman, Jamal](#); [Ward 7](#); [Ward 8](#); [Ward 9](#); [Chughtai, Aisha](#); [Ward 11](#); [Ward 12](#); [Palmisano, Linea](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] "Care Over Criminalization" Ordinance  
**Date:** Monday, April 6, 2026 5:55:04 PM

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You don't often get email from colbyjeanette@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Councilmembers,

In light of tomorrow's agenda item 2026-00096, I hope you might have time to read this article from the New York Times (4/6/26): [San Francisco Sobers Up](#).

It's a long article, but valuable for understanding how this leading progressive city is balancing compassion with the needs of the broader community. A key point is that **eliminating consequences is not always the kindest and most caring approach**.

Thank you for your consideration and service to the city,

Jeanette Colby

[EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the City of Minneapolis. Please exercise caution when opening links or attachments.

**From:** [Allison Sharkey](#)  
**To:** [Council Comment](#); [Frey, Jacob \(he/him/his\)](#); [Payne, Elliott](#); [Ward 2](#); [Ward 3](#); [Ward 4](#); [Osman, Jamal](#); [Ward 5](#); [Ward 7](#); [Ward 8](#); [Chavez, Jason](#); [aishaward10@minneapolismn.gov](mailto:aishaward10@minneapolismn.gov); [Ward 11](#); [Chowdhury, Aurin](#); [Palmisano, Linea](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Concerns about drug paraphernalia ordinance  
**Date:** Monday, April 6, 2026 5:50:03 PM

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You don't often get email from [asharkey@lakestreetcouncil.org](mailto:asharkey@lakestreetcouncil.org). [Learn why this is important](#)

Council Members,

I am concerned about the proposed ordinance legalizing drug paraphernalia that is being considered by the City Council tomorrow.

Upon first glance, it appears that the ordinance legalizes use of paraphernalia to abuse opioids in our public areas.

I believe we need to continue to have tools to protect our community members, including users, residents, employees, and business owners.

Legal tools like this can likely be leveraged to encourage participation in treatment programs as a condition of parole.

As our businesses attempt to recover from a massive hit to their sales during and after the ICE surge, we need to ensure that our commercial corridors feel welcoming and safe, which includes discouragement of outdoors abuse of hard drugs.

I would like to see an opportunity for public education and debate on this measure.

Allison Sharkey

**Allison Sharkey**

*Executive Director, Lake Street Council*

**Mobile :** 612.824.7420 **Web:** [VisitLakeStreet.com](http://VisitLakeStreet.com)

**Address:** 2925 Chicago Ave, STE 190, Minneapolis, MN 55407

**Email:** [asharkey@lakestreetcouncil.org](mailto:asharkey@lakestreetcouncil.org)

[EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the City of Minneapolis. Please exercise caution when opening links or attachments.

**From:** [Jill Knudson](#)  
**To:** [Council Comment](#)  
**Cc:** [GovDelivery](#); [Frey, Jacob \(he/him/his\)](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Drug Paraphernalia Ordinance change proposal - public comment  
**Date:** Tuesday, April 7, 2026 9:32:56 AM

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You don't often get email from [jillrilesknudson@gmail.com](mailto:jillrilesknudson@gmail.com). [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear City Council,

I am unable to attend the meeting today but am sending my letter to share my thoughts on this proposal put forward by Council members Chavez, Chowdhury, Wonsley, Payne, and Stevenson.

Background:

From Presentation (*this is where the proposal benefits are listed*)

Why this policy is important : \* • Aligns with Minneapolis's values of equity, justice, and healthy communities • This is a step toward treating drug use as a health issue, not a criminal one • Fear of paraphernalia possession has been shown to increase sharing or reusing needles, increasing the risk of infection • Fear of paraphernalia possession also increases the probability that needles are not disposed of properly

I live near Uptown, which is currently experiencing significant challenges with open drug use, safety concerns, and homelessness. I am an active walker and biker and public transportation user and experience interactions with drug users routinely and these experiences bring fear to me given erratic and sometimes aggressive behavior. This fear and uncertainty are causing the city to struggle more than that of drug use alone given the lack of foot traffic either coming into businesses or in using our public walkways and parks for fear of interacting with drug users and pushers whose behavior has proven erratic and violent in some cases.

While I do not necessarily think that arrests for paraphernalia will solve the drug and crime crisis we are currently facing in our city, I do not think that a policy of decriminalizing without some sort of significant structure for action is responsible to approve nor will it be beneficial to all in the community. The argument here for benefits seems to be focused primarily on those using the drugs with limited benefit described for the full community. Given this absence, I feel this proposal is missing the equity point it calls out as being aligned to.

My question and request for the council members are for them **NOT** to approve this proposal without first defining specific details and procedures for how action will be taken and specific data to support benefits to the health of the overall community. This step will help to ensure that progress forward to health of the full community will be recognized.

Such as:

1. How would this action impact policing of open public drug use?
  - Will this still occur or does the removal of this law effectively decrease policing this? If not intended, what are the procedures put in place to stop this from occurring?
2. If not criminal, is there other action that will still be taken to address health issues with use of drugs?
  - Is the person is seen using drugs, but since used they are gone, but paraphernalia is still present. Is there a citation for use?
  -

- If they have drugs on them, are they arrested? Sent to a treatment center?
3. What is the data behind the statement that fear of prosecution is the driver for re-use of needles?
    - What is the percentage decrease that will occur given this policy change?
  4. What is the data driving the statement that fear of prosecution will decrease the amount of drug paraphernalia thrown onto public spaces or on private businesses?
    - What facts support that this change will reduce this dangerous waste problem?
    - How does this change increase drug users' concern for the cleanliness of public areas? Is a person on drugs able to reason in that manner? What data supports this?
    - What action will be taken for people that throw used paraphernalia to the ground? Such as used syringes? How does this action decrease this?
  5. How will this Proposal improve the health of these individuals as is stated?
    - How is not arresting or fining them improving their health?
    - How do health services get provided to decrease drug use?
    - Is this an increase in taxes to cover this? Or a decrease in other spending? If so, what decreases?
  6. How are the non-drug using public affected by this?
    - Will there be increased drug use in public? This use is of great concern given the erratic behavior of drug users near non-drug using public and the fear coming to adults and children alike to seeing people inject themselves or smoke drugs.

Please ensure there are answers and plans to address these questions and a careful review of financing for this action that moves us all in a positive direction before implementing such a significant change.

Sincerely,

Jill Knudson

Ward 7

[EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the City of Minneapolis. Please exercise caution when opening links or attachments.

**From:** [Harmony Ayala](#)  
**To:** [Council Comment](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] From a concerned citizen re: proposed ordinance  
**Date:** Tuesday, April 7, 2026 2:06:14 AM

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[You don't often get email from msharmoniasass@gmail.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification> ]

Dear Mayor Frey and Members of the City Council,

I am writing as a very concerned community member regarding the proposed ordinance to remove local restrictions on drug paraphernalia, including in public spaces.

As someone who has battled Heroin/meth addiction for over a decade here on the streets in Minneapolis, I know, first hand, how ineffective this proposed ordinance will be. I've now be clean for 6 years, but it took me a few trips to Hennepin County Jail to really look in the mirror to see that I only had one option when I left jail. Treatment. And I'm no one special and had no family or friends to help.

And while out there on the streets, as horrible as my life was, I turned down soo many opportunities to get clean. And it was because I wasn't being held accountable at the time. And I believe the same will happen here for the many who are still addicted, as the program also wasn't successful in Oregon too (Measure 110).

I do see the current challenges we face every day, with my own eyes, and it's done by a small amount of repeat offenders who unfortunately have a very large, negative impact on the community, businesses and visitors to our area who are trying to change this place for the better. We need to keep moving Uptown in the right direction.

And something must change. I agree. But it's not this proposed ordinance.

I urge you to consider a more balanced approach, one that supports access to treatment while maintaining the ability to intervene in situations where behavior is harming the broader community.

Compassion and accountability are not opposites. We need both to create meaningful, lasting change.

Thank you for your time and for your service to our city.

Sincerely,  
Harmony Robinson  
Uptown, Minneapolis

Sent from my iPhone

[EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the City of Minneapolis. Please exercise caution when opening links or attachments.

**From:** [Chuck Ledermann](#)  
**To:** [Council Comment](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Fwd: Say No! Compassion is providing Drug Addiction support services not endorsing Drug Usage  
**Date:** Tuesday, April 7, 2026 9:34:46 AM

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You don't often get email from chuckledermann@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear City of Minneapolis Leaders,

PLEASE! DO NOT PASS ORDINANCES ENDORSING DRUG USAGE!

I am writing as a concerned community member regarding the proposed ordinance to remove local restrictions on drug paraphernalia, including in public spaces.

Please do not prioritize the non-legal drug users rights over the rights of the struggling community, neighborhood residents and businesses you represent.

In Uptown for example, many of the current challenges are being driven by a small number of repeat offenders whose behavior is impacting residents, workers, and small businesses.

According to my neighborhood text message group, most of my neighbors regularly have to deal with issues caused by high drug users trying to break into their property or searching around their yards. It is completely unclear to all of my neighbors and I what problem you are solving by passing this ordinance.

I urge you to say no and rather invest in a focused and accelerated drug addiction outreach program. THIS WOULD BE TRUE COMPASSION.

Thank you for your time and for your service to our city.

Sincerely,

Chuck Ledermann

[EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the City of Minneapolis. Please exercise caution when opening links or attachments.

**From:** [Carol Dines](#)  
**To:** [Council Comment](#); [Ward 8](#); [Ward 9](#); [Ward 10](#); [Ward 11](#); [Ward 12](#); [Palmisano, Linea](#)  
**Cc:** [Frey, Jacob \(he/him/his\)](#); [elliott.payne@minneapolismn.gov](mailto:elliott.payne@minneapolismn.gov); [Ward 2](#); [Ward 3](#); [Ward 4](#); [Ward 5](#); [Osman, Jamal](#); [Ward 7](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] new ordinance  
**Date:** Monday, April 6, 2026 9:19:37 PM

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You don't often get email from [cdinesmn@gmail.com](mailto:cdinesmn@gmail.com). [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Mayor and City Council Members,

I apologize for sending a group letter, but time is of the essence since you are discussing the new ordinance at nine am tomorrow. I'm going to begin my letter by quoting an article in today's New York Times, an article about San Francisco, a city that, like Portland, recently reversed their decriminalization of drug use. "As the situation deteriorated, the city's progressives defended their strategy. They argued that people have physical autonomy, meaning they should be allowed to put whatever they want into their bodies. San Francisco's experience showed those freedoms, when translated into public drug use, infringed on other people's right to public safety and order. Many San Franciscans lost access to the basic rights of modern life: walkable spaces, secure parks, grocery stores and pharmacies. A minority's unchecked drug use was wrecking the city for everyone else."

When I read the new ordinance, my jaw dropped. I wondered if this city council is serious about helping our city recover, and by recover, I mean reduce crime and bring back and support small businesses. I've lived in Uptown for 37 years, and I've watched the drug use and crime continue to escalate. We in Uptown now have 3 dispensaries and a health clinic that caters to addicts in a six block radius. How does that help bring back business? Many on this council have advocated for a biking and walking city, but when you have no where to go, or when you have to walk past drug deals and addicts to get where you want to go, public safety is compromised. And it makes it much harder to attract new businesses where people are openly using drugs.

I am not demonizing drug addicts. I come from a family with addiction, and I don't believe addicts like the life of addiction and don't want help. I have also seen first hand what happens when drugs are decriminalized. My daughter lives in Portland. For the four years when drugs were legal, the city collapsed. People stopped going downtown. My son in law works downtown, and he would have to step over bodies to get in the door of his business. Eventually, they moved the business, and people who could, left the city. If you want to see an exodus from this city, pass the ordinance. If you want to help this city recover, offer help and housing to addicts, but do not legalize drug use publicly. We are a city that has shown its best these past few months, but we are still recovering. I urge you to pay attention to what has happened other cities that decriminalize drug use and please do not repeat their mistake.

Thank you, Carol Dines  
3245 Irving Avenue South  
Minneapolis, MN. 55408

[EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the City of Minneapolis. Please exercise caution when opening links or attachments.

**From:** [Brian Lammers](#)  
**To:** [Council Comment](#); [Frey, Jacob \(he/him/his\)](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] No to removing local restrictions on drug paraphernalia  
**Date:** Tuesday, April 7, 2026 7:42:05 AM

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You don't often get email from [brian.lammers@gmail.com](mailto:brian.lammers@gmail.com). [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Mayor Frey and Members of the City Council,

I am writing as a concerned community member regarding the proposed ordinance to remove local restrictions on drug paraphernalia, including in public spaces.

I strongly support public health approaches to addiction and believe in treating people with dignity and respect. However, I also believe that effective policy must balance compassion with accountability.

We have seen similar approaches tested in places like Oregon under Measure 110. While well-intentioned, the lack of structured accountability led to low engagement with treatment and growing challenges in public spaces. In response, Oregon has since revised its approach to reintroduce accountability while also expanding pathways to treatment through deflection programs.

In Uptown, many of the current challenges are being driven by a small number of repeat offenders whose behavior is impacting residents, workers, and small businesses. Policies that remove tools for intervention risk allowing these patterns to continue unchecked.

I urge you to consider a more balanced approach, one that supports access to treatment while maintaining the ability to intervene in situations where behavior is harming the broader community.

Compassion and accountability are not opposites. We need both to create meaningful, lasting change.

Thank you for your time and for your service to our city.

Sincerely,

Brian Lammers  
East Isles Neighborhood

[EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the City of Minneapolis. Please exercise caution when opening links or attachments.

**From:** [Emily Knox](#)  
**To:** [Council Comment; Frey, Jacob \(he/him/his\)](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Please don't remove local restrictions on drug paraphernalia  
**Date:** Tuesday, April 7, 2026 8:29:04 AM

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You don't often get email from emily2437@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Mayor Frey and Members of the City Council,

I am writing as a concerned community member regarding the proposed ordinance to remove local restrictions on drug paraphernalia, including in public spaces.

I strongly support public health approaches to addiction and believe in treating people with dignity and respect. However, I also believe that effective policy must balance compassion with accountability.

We have seen similar approaches tested in places like Oregon under Measure 110. While well-intentioned, the lack of structured accountability led to low engagement with treatment and growing challenges in public spaces. In response, Oregon has since revised its approach to reintroduce accountability while also expanding pathways to treatment through deflection programs.

In Uptown, many of the current challenges are being driven by a small number of repeat offenders whose behavior is impacting residents, workers, and small businesses. Policies that remove tools for intervention risk allowing these patterns to continue unchecked.

I urge you to consider a more balanced approach, one that supports access to treatment while maintaining the ability to intervene in situations where behavior is harming the broader community.

Compassion and accountability are not opposites. We need both to create meaningful, lasting change.

Thank you for your time and for your service to our city.

Sincerely,

Emily Knox  
Minneapolis Ward 7

[EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the City of Minneapolis. Please exercise caution when opening links or attachments.

**From:** [Claire Ruebeck](#)  
**To:** [Council Comment](#); [Frey, Jacob \(he/him/his\)](#); [Payne, Elliott](#); [Ward 2](#); [Ward 3](#); [Ward 4](#); [Warren, Pearl Y](#); [Osman, Jamal](#); [Ward 7](#); [Ward 8](#); [Ward 9](#); [Chughtai, Aisha](#); [Ward 11](#); [Ward 12](#); [Palmisano, Linea](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Policy necessitates compassion, individual accountability, and healthful pathway for all  
**Date:** Monday, April 6, 2026 4:41:26 PM  
**Attachments:** [Drug Paraphernalia Ordinance.pdf](#)

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You don't often get email from [claireruebeck@gmail.com](mailto:claireruebeck@gmail.com). [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear City Councilpersons and Mayor Frey -

Thank you for your service to the city and focus on city business.

Reviewing the upcoming agenda, I am compelled to write in opposition to the initiative which would remove restrictions of drug paraphernalia use in public spaces. It is not clear how this dramatic shift aids the wellbeing of those who are addicted and the community at large. The community would be better served with interventions that connect them to treatment and support services.

Effective public policy, especially public health initiatives, require both compassion and accountability as is shown by the recent reversal of "open use" policies in Oregon. Similarly San Francisco has moved to accountability and care interventions that are improving conditions. See attached from NYT.

In Minneapolis, there are specific geographies such as Lake Street, Uptown, and public transportation modes that are deeply impacted by public drug use. Businesses, schools, and dwellings in these areas face ongoing serious challenges. The safety and healthful conditions for these entities and residents warrant equal consideration in policy development. Further, travelers and convention planners also take such matters into consideration when deciding where to visit.

Please keep the intent of the existing ordinance in place.

Truly,

Claire Ruebeck

[EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the City of Minneapolis. Please exercise caution when opening links or attachments.



Opinion | San Francisco Sobers Up  
nytimes.com

From The New York Times: San Francisco Sobers Up  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2026/04/06/opinion/san-francisco-drugs-decriminalization-fentanyl.html?smid=em-share>

**From:** [Charles Lyon](#)  
**To:** [Council Comment](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Proposed Ordinance on Drug Paraphernalia  
**Date:** Monday, April 6, 2026 9:19:43 PM

You don't often get email from pietown@aol.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Mayor Frey and Members of the City Council,

I am writing as a concerned community member regarding the proposed ordinance to remove local restrictions on drug paraphernalia, including in public spaces.

I strongly support public health approaches to addiction and believe in treating people with dignity and respect. However, I also believe that effective policy must balance compassion with accountability.

We have seen similar approaches tested in places like Oregon under Measure 110. While well-intentioned, the lack of structured accountability led to low engagement with treatment and growing challenges in public spaces. In response, Oregon has since revised its approach to reintroduce accountability while also expanding pathways to treatment through deflection programs.

In Uptown, many of the current challenges are being driven by a small number of repeat offenders whose behavior is impacting residents, workers, and small businesses. Policies that remove tools for intervention risk allowing these patterns to continue unchecked.

I urge you to consider a more balanced approach, one that supports access to treatment while maintaining the ability to intervene in situations where behavior is harming the broader community.

Compassion and accountability are not opposites. We need both to create meaningful, lasting change.

Thank you for your time and for your service to our city.

Sincerely,

Charles Lyon  
East Isles

Uptown Association | 2801 Hennepin Avenue S., Box 281 | Minneapolis, MN 55408 US

[EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the City of Minneapolis. Please exercise caution when opening links or attachments.

**From:** [Arthur Anderson](#)  
**To:** [Council Comment](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Uptown drug challenges  
**Date:** Monday, April 6, 2026 2:35:54 PM

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You don't often get email from fanofthebry@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Hello City of Minneapolis,

As a property owner in Uptown, I am in full support of structured intervention to address the current drug addiction challenge in our neighborhood. Combining accountability and intervention appears to be the way other cities have addressed this issue. Engage, hold accountable those addicted and intervene.

Thank you for addressing this issue head on.

Arthur Anderson  
3624 Colfax Ave. S #102  
Minneapolis, MN 55409

[EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the City of Minneapolis. Please exercise caution when opening links or attachments.

**From:** [Andrew Vaaler](#)  
**To:** [Chughtai, Aisha](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Vote against the Drug Paraphernalia Decriminalization Proposal  
**Date:** Monday, April 6, 2026 6:10:50 PM

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You don't often get email from akvaaler@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear City Council Members, including my Ward 10 representative CM Chughtai:

I live in Uptown, a drug-trafficking hot-spot in Minneapolis. We are trying hard to revive this area, and make the business corridors safe for people to use again. I'm tired of seeing people hunched over, in a fentanyl stupor at midday. Or trying to explain to kids what's the matter with that guy over there at the bus stop. I'm tired of finding needles on the sidewalk, feces in the doorways, and trash left behind where the drug-users congregate.

I understand the pros and cons of the Drug Paraphernalia (DP) decriminalization proposal. But here in Uptown, we have a big problem, and this proposal will make it more difficult to get this problem under control. To reduce drug trafficking and use, we need a balance between offering addicts services for help, but still enforcing laws to keep things under control. This DP decriminalization proposal will make it harder for police to do their thing to keep our streets safe and healthy. I urge all of the City Council members to please vote against it.

Andy Vaaler  
3200 Holmes Ave.  
cc: Mayor Jacob Frey

[EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the City of Minneapolis. Please exercise caution when opening links or attachments.

**From:** [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)  
**To:** [Council Comment](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment:  
**Date:** Monday, April 6, 2026 5:06:44 PM

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## Public Comment:

Date: 04/06/26, 5:04 PM

2026-00096

Dear Mayor Frey and City Council,

I'm writing as a Minneapolis resident and parent who lives near the Walker Library. I want to share a concern that I believe reflects a broader challenge our community faces as we implement Minnesota's harm reduction policies, and to ask for your help finding a solution.

I support the public health goals behind decriminalizing drug paraphernalia. I understand that connecting people who use drugs to services, rather than arresting them, is likely the right long-term approach. But I want to be honest with you about what open drug use looks like on the ground for my family.

The park area outside the Walker Library, as well as the alcoves of storefronts in Uptown, have become regular sites of open drug use. As a result, I no longer feel comfortable letting my child walk to the library independently, which is something I would otherwise allow. A trip to the public library, which should be one of the most accessible and enriching things a child can do in this city, now requires me to accompany him every time. Now we often drive to the library instead of walk or bike, for the same reason of not wanting accidentally step on needles and broken glass on the ground. A few weeks ago, after leaving the library, I called 911 to let them know a fire had just been started on the stoop of one of the empty apartment buildings behind the library by a person who seemed to be engaged in drug use.

I'm not asking for additional criminalization or for people struggling with addiction to be pushed elsewhere with no support. I am asking for a concrete plan to make this city's public spaces safe and welcoming for all residents, including children. I think this plan should be funded and in place before

making a policy change that could make enforcement more difficult for both private property owners and the police. I have personally witnessed on several occasions how difficult a job the security person at Walker Library has today, and I am concerned that the shift in the legality of drug paraphernalia might make this already difficult job impossible.

I've also been following what happened in Portland over the past few years, and I think there are real lessons for Minneapolis. Oregon's Measure 110 decriminalized drug possession with genuinely good intentions, but one of the most widely acknowledged failures was that the legal reform moved faster than the services and infrastructure needed to support it. Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler himself said that decriminalizing before treatment capacity was in place was "obviously a huge mistake."

(<https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/01/us/oregon-drug-law-portland-mayor.html>) The result was that public spaces like parks, sidewalks, and library entrances, bore the visible consequences, which eroded public support for the entire harm reduction approach and seems to have led Oregon to reverse course.

I don't want that to happen here. Minnesota's paraphernalia reform seems to be narrower and more carefully designed than Oregon's, and I want it to succeed. But success requires that the city pair legal reform with visible, adequately resourced outreach in the specific places where the effects are most felt by the broader community.

Even in today's edition of the New York Times an editorial appeared on this subject regarding San Francisco

(<https://www.nytimes.com/2026/04/06/opinion/san-francisco-drugs-decriminalization-fentanyl.html>).

Some questions I'd like answered:

- Is the city actively working with harm reduction organizations to provide outreach and services in this area? Do they have sufficient capacity?
- Are there resources specifically designated for library-adjacent public spaces?
- What is the city's policy on responding to open drug use in spaces heavily used by families and children? What if the spaces are private property vs. public?
- Is there a strategic timeline for making these policy changes contingent on outcomes aligning with goals?

Thank you for your service.

Ward: Ward 7

I don't know, share with all City Council

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**From:** [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)  
**To:** [Council Comment](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment: Andre Robinson  
**Date:** Monday, April 6, 2026 2:53:00 PM

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## Public Comment: Andre Robinson

Date: 04/06/26, 2:50 PM

2026-00096

Aligning the City of Minneapolis' drug paraphernalia code with state law is important to improving public health. As a public health worker who takes part in harm reduction services, I hear first-hand from participants who are afraid to bring in their used syringes for safe disposal because they fear of drug paraphernalia charges. This policy will make it easier for people to safely dispose of their used syringes, thereby reducing potential for syringe litter. Moreover, providing safer use paraphernalia decreases drug related harm, including spread of infectious diseases.

Ward: Ward 2

I don't know, share with all City Council

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**From:** [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)  
**To:** [Council Comment](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment: Edward Krumpotich  
**Date:** Tuesday, April 7, 2026 8:16:21 AM

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## Public Comment: Edward Krumpotich

Date: 04/07/26, 8:14 AM

2026-00096

The state level adoption of the decriminalization of drug paraphernalia and drug residue is a monumental achievement in the push towards pivoting substance use to public health rather than a jail cell.

Original concerns about syringe litter, spiking overdoses and increases in crime have largely gone unfounded.

Since the 2023 measure, we have seen a precipitous drop in overdoses, lower crime and lower syringe litter reported anecdotally in neighborhoods across the city.

The CDC guidance is clear. Harm reduction measures such as these increase the likelihood someone enters chemical dependency treatment by 5 times, they lower infectious diseases by 50% and curb drug use patters. In studies conducted across the United States no increases in crime have been reported.

As the founder of the Minnesota Harm Reduction Collaborative, the advocacy group that spearheaded the state wide paraphernalia law, I have been pleased with the initial outcomes of our measure.

Advocates in our state worked tirelessly to research and listen to both persons of lived experience and experts in the field. We followed peer review science and decades of evidence based practice.

Since the drug war was initiated in the 1970's, we have seen a drastic uptick in incarceration and substance related overdoses. We have, for decades, criminalized persons who use substances with little to show for it.

Minnesota's paraphernalia decriminalization finally took a step forward in treating substance use as a health issue. These measures take time to produce causal evidentiary support, we have decades of failed criminalization policies to unwind and it will take time.

We do however trust the overwhelming scientific evidence to suggest that harm reduction, decriminalization and treating substance use as a health issue is the proper step forward.

For those who worry about the safety of their neighborhoods and businesses, know this, we heard the same concerns three years ago. We took great care in listening to the communities and fears surrounding our bill never materialized. In fact, we've heard of the opposite.

As one of the lead researchers behind our statewide bill I, and others can attest, followed the science. We implemented best practices and recommended interventions given by the leading substance use agencies in our state and country.

I ask that you trust us again. Our advocates, social service organizations, physicians groups and others work tirelessly to curb substance use outcomes and heal our city. We've been succeeding.

It's not time to turn back now. It's time for Minneapolis to follow the state recommendations and decriminalize drug paraphernalia.

Thank you,

Edward Krumpotich

Founder

Minnesota Harm Reduction Collaborative

Lead Advocates Behind Minnesota's Drug Paraphernalia And Drug Residue Bill

Ward: I do not reside in Minneapolis

I don't know, share with all City Council

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**From:** [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)  
**To:** [Council Comment](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment: Edward Krumpotuch  
**Date:** Tuesday, April 7, 2026 9:31:18 AM

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## Public Comment: Edward Krumpotuch

Date: 04/07/26, 9:29 AM

2026-00096

I did have an addendum to the comment I left earlier endorsing the decriminalization efforts.

It is also important to reflect that the original paraphernalia bill at the state level received no pushback from law enforcement partners in Minneapolis or around the state. In direct conversations with peace officers, they too noted that a pivot to public health was an appropriate change.

In fact, law enforcement officials partnered with the Minnesota Harm Reduction Collaborative on a bill pivoting peace officers to public health outfits on the suspicion of substance use under the 5th degree possession statute. It was their partnership and dedication to a public health direction that helped pass our measure.

Lastly, I fully endorse the work that ImpactMN is having in the space since 2023. It is under their caucus and leadership that recent research is being developed and practiced. Their work is helping to save lives in the state and their evidence based approach is a testament to the organizations and persons they represent. I am proud to put unwavering support around their work which focuses on a health based solution for mental health. They represent and uplift the collective of our community, from persons with lived experience, to leading medical associations and social service organizations among others.

They are continuing and broadening the brave policy initiatives brought by the Minnesota Harm Reduction Collaborative in 2023.

I trust their guidance and their brave pursuit of a healthier Minnesota for all.

Thanks,

Edward Krumpotich  
Founder Of Minnesota Harm Reduction Collaborative

Ward: I do not reside in Minneapolis

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**From:** [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)  
**To:** [Council Comment](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment: Nicole Mason  
**Date:** Tuesday, April 7, 2026 9:47:49 AM

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## **Public Comment: Nicole Mason**

Date: 04/07/26, 9:45 AM

Drug paraphernalia decriminalization ordinance file number: 2026-00096

Hello Council Members, My name is Nicole Mason. I live in Ward 9 and I am a proud Anishinaabe woman in recovery.

The Care over Criminalization ordinance should not be controversial. All it does is align Minneapolis ordinance to reflect a 2023 change in state law.

Criminalizing paraphernalia was meant to discourage drug use, but instead, it creates avoidable disease and death.

Decriminalization encourages a public health response to substance use.

Public health responses reduce the spread of preventable diseases and lower deaths from overdose; drug paraphernalia laws stand in the way of harm reduction organizations.

Decriminalization reduces the stigma and shame that often prevent people from seeking help.

Not having a criminal record means not being afraid to ask for help out of fear of being arrested.

Public health approaches decrease needle litter and improve access to services such as housing and recovery.

Jail is not the answer to a public health crisis that continues to result in disproportionate overdose and incarceration of Black, brown and Indigenous people.

Minnesota has some of the worst racial disparities in the country, and time behind bars very often only increases barriers.

Criminalization results in people being denied jobs and housing.

Arresting people for having a medical condition does not decrease drug use, it creates harms that negatively impact individuals, families, and communities.

Please support the Care over Criminalization Ordinance so that we can focus on evidence-based, effective, common-sense approaches to substance use that respects the dignity and autonomy of our relatives.

Ward: Ward 9

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**From:** [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)  
**To:** [Council Comment](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment: Steve Delisi  
**Date:** Monday, April 6, 2026 5:10:57 PM

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## Public Comment: Steve Delisi

Date: 04/06/26, 5:08 PM

2026-00096

I applaud the Minneapolis City Council for taking up this issue and working to ensure that substance use and substance use disorder are addressed at the individual, family, and community levels from a public health perspective. I ask that you carefully consider all the various intersections of comments you have undoubtedly received, and see that individuals who use drugs and who have substance use disorders need our societal response to be one of care and compassion and not criminalization and incarceration. With close to 30 years of clinical and academic experience as a psychiatrist, addiction medicine physician, and professor, I am dedicated to educating health systems, healthcare professionals, and my friends and neighbors about the public health responses to drug use and the brain science of SUD.

Ward: I do not reside in Minneapolis

I don't know, share with all City Council

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**From:** [Danelle Reid](#)  
**To:** [Council Comment; Frey, Jacob \(he/him/his\); Ward 7](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Local Restrictions on Drug Paraphernalia  
**Date:** Monday, April 6, 2026 1:54:04 PM

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Dear Mayor Frey and Members of the City Council,

I am writing as a concerned community member regarding the proposed ordinance to remove local restrictions on drug paraphernalia, including in public spaces.

I strongly support public health approaches to addiction and believe in treating people with dignity and respect. However, I also believe that effective policy must balance compassion with accountability.

We have seen similar approaches tested in places like Oregon under Measure 110. While well-intentioned, the lack of structured accountability led to low engagement with treatment and growing challenges in public spaces. In response, Oregon has since revised its approach to reintroduce accountability while also expanding pathways to treatment through deflection programs.

In Uptown, many of the current challenges are being driven by a small number of repeat offenders whose behavior is impacting residents, workers, and small businesses. Policies that remove tools for intervention risk allowing these patterns to continue unchecked.

I urge you to consider a more balanced approach, one that supports access to treatment while maintaining the ability to intervene in situations where behavior is harming the broader community.

Compassion and accountability are not opposites. We need both to create meaningful, lasting change.

Thank you for your time and for your service to our city.

Sincerely,

Danelle Reid |  
612.849.5989 |

[EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the City of Minneapolis. Please exercise caution when opening links or attachments.

**From:** [D Russo](#)  
**To:** [Frey, Jacob \(he/him/his\)](#); [Payne, Elliott](#); [Ward 2](#); [Ward 3](#); [Ward 4](#); [Warren, Pearl Y](#); [Osman, Jamal](#); [Ward 7](#); [Ward 8](#); [Ward 9](#); [Chughtai, Aisha](#); [Ward 11](#); [Ward 12](#); [Palmisano, Linea](#); [Council Comment](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Public Health and Safety - Please Reconsider a Proposed Ordinance  
**Date:** Monday, April 6, 2026 3:26:47 PM

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You don't often get email from [diannefrusso@gmail.com](mailto:diannefrusso@gmail.com). [Learn why this is important](#)

## Dear Mayor Frey and Members of the City Council,

I'm writing as a Minneapolis resident - living on Humboldt Ave. South in South Uptown - who cares deeply about both public health and the wellbeing of our neighborhoods. As you consider the proposed ordinance removing local restrictions on drug paraphernalia, including in public spaces, I urge you to weigh its potential impact on community safety and recovery outcomes.

I fully support treating addiction as a health issue and ensuring that people are met with dignity and compassion. At the same time, experience from other jurisdictions shows that compassion alone is not enough to produce meaningful engagement with treatment.

In Oregon, for example, Measure 110 was created with the best of intentions. But without clear, structured accountability, treatment participation remained low and public disorder increased. Oregon has since revised its approach—reintroducing accountability while expanding access to treatment through deflection programs—because the original model wasn't delivering the outcomes communities needed.

Here in Uptown, many of the challenges we residents and businesses face stem from a small number of repeat offenders whose behavior continues despite multiple interventions. Removing tools that allow for timely, proportionate responses risks allowing these patterns to persist and further erode public trust.

I respectfully urge you to pursue a balanced approach—one that expands access to treatment and harm-reduction services while preserving the ability to intervene when behavior is causing harm. Accountability and compassion are not opposing values; together, they create the conditions for real, lasting change.

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to our city.

Sincerely,

Dianne Russo

[EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the City of Minneapolis. Please exercise caution when opening links or attachments.

**From:** [Gordon Vermeer](#)  
**To:** [Chughtai, Aisha](#); [Frey, Jacob \(he/him/his\)](#); [Council Comment](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Proposed ordinance related to drug paraphernalia  
**Date:** Monday, April 6, 2026 1:37:33 PM

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You don't often get email from [gordon.vermeer@gmail.com](mailto:gordon.vermeer@gmail.com). [Learn why this is important](#)

Hi Mayor Frey and City Council,

I'm writing as a South Uptown resident concerned about the proposal to remove restrictions on drug paraphernalia, including in public spaces.

I strongly support treating addiction as a public health issue and believe people deserve dignity and access to care-- and I also believe our approach needs to allow simple interventions that hold people accountable.

Our neighborhood is under strain, and we won't benefit in the long run by see-sawing between all-or-nothing positions. I hope you'll consider a more balanced approach—one that expands access to treatment while still allowing intervention when behavior is harming the community.

Thanks for your time and for your service to Minneapolis.

Best,  
Gordon Vermeer  
South Uptown resident

[EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the City of Minneapolis. Please exercise caution when opening links or attachments.

**From:** [Rochelle Lorenz](#)  
**To:** [Council Comment](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Lifting Restrictions on Drug Paraphernalia  
**Date:** Monday, April 6, 2026 4:12:51 PM

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I support INSTATING restrictions on drug paraphernalia in Uptown.

I do not live in Minneapolis anymore. I live in St. Louis Park but drive through Uptown and used to frequent the neighborhood more often.

I believe that "cleaning up" Uptown will require restrictions on anything drug related, including drug paraphernalia.

Right now and I believe partly because of lack of restrictions, Uptown is not a desirable location (as it used to be). The residents, businesses and visitors to the area deserve better.

Practice tough love for good lives!

Best regards,

Rochelle Lorenz

[EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the City of Minneapolis. Please exercise caution when opening links or attachments.

## Waldegerma, Michael

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**From:** Grant Johnson via Smartsheet <automation@app.smartsheet.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 7, 2026 10:54 AM  
**To:** Council Comment  
**Subject:** Public Comment: (2 entries)



### Public Comment: (2 entries)

Public Comment:

Date: 04/07/26, 10:52 AM

I am currently sick with the flu, but I am watching the public comments today about the decriminalization of drug paraphenilia and some of these commenters against the decriminalization have made some disgusting comments. Saying downtown is dying cause of drug users and feeling unsafe because of them on the street is so privileged to say when you are not a drug user. I am not a supporter of the decriminalizing of drug paraphernalia, but I can see the importance of it for those who are trying to recover by harm reduction, and by centering others who have NOT suffered from drug use is disgusting and those people should feel ashamed at how they are painting these drug users. I am SO sorry you felt scared by a drug user yelling at you at 7 am, but grow the fuck up and keep walking. Im sure the person who is currently facing drug abuse and homelessness feels a whole lot more afraid. Drug users and unhoused people are not fucking animals. Where unhoused people live arent "drug camps." After hearing what I did today, I will tell you I would feel a whole lot safer with some of the folks I have met on the street then some of the women who spoke at todays public comment.

Ward:

Public Health, Safety & Equity (PHSE)

-

Public Comment: Thomas Saunders

Date: 04/07/26, 10:52 AM

CH2023-00003

I want my city councillor to have the ability to ask questions of anyone seeking to lead all city departments and to have the ability to deny their vote to them if they are unqualified for that role.

I believe the city works best when both the City Council and the Mayor's office can agree on who and how to run the city.

Putting as much power as this amendment does in the executive office only allows for less oversight, more abuse, and gives no protection against a malfunctioning executive.

Further, I do not understand what issue it is solving. When was the last time an appointment was voted down by the city council? If appointments were such a problem, we would be able to point to such a case, but it has not happened in recent memory.

Discontinue this anti-democratic proposal.

Ward: Ward 2

Charter Commission

**From:** [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)  
**To:** [Council Comment](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment:  
**Date:** Monday, April 6, 2026 1:09:26 PM

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## **Public Comment:**

Date: 04/06/26, 1:07 PM

2026-00096

I am writing in strong support of File No. 2026-00096. Drug paraphernalia laws disproportionately affect low income people, people of color, and unhoused people. Those with consistent access to homes, cars, and privacy are not prosecuted for drug paraphernalia crimes. Moreover, prosecution for drug paraphernalia possession does nothing to reduce the use of drugs in our communities. Instead, it pushes drug use further underground and causes people to reuse dirty supplies, endangering them and many in their communities.

The State of Minnesota has already recognized these truths, and it decriminalized drug paraphernalia possession in 2023. Minneapolis is often a leader in the state on issues that affect the most marginalized among us. Minneapolis should change its ordinances to match Minnesota state law as soon as possible.

File number 2026-00096 positions Minneapolis to take a health-based approach to substance use. I urge the Council to pass it. Thank you.

Ward: Ward 9

I don't know, share with all City Council

<!--[if !mso]-->

# UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

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*Twin Cities Campus  
Building*

*Divisions of General Internal Medicine and Pediatrics*

*Mayo Memorial*

*Department of Medicine*

*MMC 741  
420 Delaware Street SE  
Minneapolis, MN 55455  
Office: 612-624-8984  
Fax: 612-624-3189*

Chair Chowdhury - Committee of the Whole  
350 S. Fifth St., Room 370  
Minneapolis, MN 55415

April 6 2026  
Re: File 2026-00096

Dear Chair Chowdhury, Vice Chair Chughtai, and Committee of the Whole Members,

My name is Dr. Ryan Kelly, and I am an Addiction Medicine, Internal Medicine, and Pediatric physician in Minneapolis. I practice both at the University of Minnesota Medical Center and at the Community University Health Care Center. Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments in support of Ordinance 2026-00096, which would decriminalize drug paraphernalia in the City of Minneapolis.

In 2023, Minnesota became the first state in the country to remove most penalties associated with drug paraphernalia possession. I worked closely with the Minnesota Medical Association, syringe service providers, criminal justice reform partners, law enforcement, and the state legislature to advocate for this change. We recognized that this was a practical, evidence-based policy change that would strengthen both public health and public safety by reducing overdose risks, preventing disease, and lessening litter and other community impacts. However, the state law still allows local municipalities and counties to maintain or adopt ordinances criminalizing drug paraphernalia which has led to uneven implementation across the state.

The Minnesota Medical Association, which represents 10,000 physicians across Minnesota, has existing policy language in support of this ordinance (key highlights from the MMA's policy language are listed below). The proposed Minneapolis ordinance would bring the city into alignment with state policy and public health goals. Experience has shown that harsh penalties for drug use and paraphernalia do not help people and only worsen the tragic overdose crisis. Tougher laws push people toward unsafe practices and illicit markets, resulting in preventable disease and overdose. These increased risks are particularly prevalent among low-income communities and communities of color.

I see the impacts of these harsh penalties on my patients every day. Increased HIV infections, increased Hepatitis C infections, increased hospitalizations for bacterial infections due to decreased access to sterile equipment, less access to overdose supplies, increased overdoses due to this and lack of access to testing strips, and criminalization leading to records, are all issues my patients face. This proposal will positively impact all of these barriers.

This proposal also aligns with recommendations from Minnesota's Task Force on Holistic and Effective Responses to Illicit Drug Use (a Task Force I chaired) which endorsed further closing loopholes in paraphernalia laws with overwhelming support (83%). The Task Force's membership – including the Minnesota Medical Association and medical professionals, County Social Service Administrators, Indian Affairs Council, law enforcement representatives, and criminal justice reform representatives – reflects broad consensus across systems and sectors.

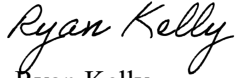
To strengthen the ordinance, we encourage the Council to consider:

- Ensuring full alignment with state law by defining “drug paraphernalia” broadly, so that all equipment and materials used to manufacture or consume a substance are covered — avoiding lists of examples that could leave some items criminalized.

- Clarifying that the presence of a residual amount of a controlled substance within paraphernalia does not constitute probable cause for a violation (Minneapolis Ordinance 223.220).

I strongly support the Minneapolis City Ordinance 2026-00096. Decriminalizing drug paraphernalia is an essential next step toward a practical, equitable, and health-focused response to substance use. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Ryan Kelly

Director, Addiction Medicine Consults, University of Minnesota Medical Center  
Primary Care and Addiction Medicine, Community University Health Care Center  
Associate Professor of Medicine, University of Minnesota Medical School

Included for additional support, policy language from the Minnesota Medical Association:

#### 531 Decriminalization of Simple Possession of Illicit Drugs ([p. 111](#))

“...Given the health consequences of criminalizing simple possession, the MMA supports a decriminalization model in Minnesota that includes the following general components: 1. The removal of criminal penalties for the possession of a small quantity of illicit drug for personal use and/or the possession of drug paraphernalia...

#### 531.2 Harm Reduction of Illicit Drug Use ([p. 112](#))

##### “Drug Checking

The MMA recognizes that drug checking, or the ability of PWUD to measure the presence and/or quantity of dangerous adulterants in substances they intend to consume, is a crucial tool for reducing drug-related injury and overdose associated with consuming unknown substances. To increase access to drug checking, the MMA will:

- (1) support the exclusion of any equipment that detects the presence and/or quantity of dangerous adulterants in illicit drugs for personal use from the statutory definition of drug paraphernalia.
- (2) amplify the efforts of, and advocate greater funding for, community-based drug-checking equipment distribution programs and community-based advanced chemical analysis programs.

##### Access to Safe Drug Use Supplies and Infection Control Supplies

The MMA recognizes that access to safe drug use supplies, including, but not limited to, syringes, cookers, tourniquets, antibiotic ointment, and cotton balls, is crucial for reducing harm associated with people who use injectable drugs. To increase access to safe drug use supplies, the MMA will:

- (1) Advocate for the decriminalization of all drug paraphernalia, including, but not limited to, syringes, hypodermic needles, pipes, test strips, and disposable cookers.
- (2) Support state legislation to allow any pharmacy or licensed pharmacist to sell sterile syringes and hypodermic needles in quantities greater than 10, including, but not limited to, an amendment to Minnesota Statutes Chapter 151.4, Subdivision 2, Part (a).
- (3) Amplify the efforts of, and advocate greater funding for, community-based safer drug use programs, including, but not limited to, syringe service programs. The MMA also recognizes that access to infection control supplies, including, but not limited to, condoms, take-home infectious disease tests, pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), and bleach, is crucial for reducing harm associated with injection drug use. To increase access to infection control supplies, the MMA will advocate that community-based harm reduction programs continue to offer infection control supply distribution services.

**Matthew Emerson**  
[www.socialmn.org](http://www.socialmn.org)  
**Northeast Minneapolis**  
**Homeowner**

### **Council members**

Good morning and thank you for having me today to discuss paraphernalia and the consequences of decriminalizing miscellaneous objects that pertain to drug use in our fair city. I have personally welcomed home over 400 people from jails, institutions, and death's door in the city of Minneapolis over the past five years.

I direct a recovery community based on supporting justice-impacted members of our community and partner with the Department of Corrections to house offenders who get out of prison and have nowhere to go by offering temporary and dignified housing.

This work has brought me to the doors of some challenging situations:

- a person with 23 cats in a single room occupancy,
- paraphernalia,
- overdose death,
- and many varying situations in between.

I do my best as a community member to support individuals' paths of growth, meeting them where they begin and "bringing them as far as possible."

In my work, there are great challenges and very unclear situations.

For example: Currently, I am advocating for a Karen thôm(man), who was caught with a very very small amount of fentanyl due to their drug use after coming to America and being exposed to our epidemic. Because of this individuals' green card status the minuscule amount of fentanyl they possessed in their hand (while passed out in the street). Will cause him to lose his green card. Permanently.

We must assist in protecting folks like this in our community by giving prosecutors the ability to lower this charge to paraphernalia, or take some action to avoid a death sentence of returning to a country where real genocide is occurring because of a public health crisis here in Minnesota.

### **Situations such as this should provide justice officials discretion.**

It is our hope that our city, public roadways, trains, and buses be protected for all residents through the use of discretion... and tools related to accountability to our community members.

Thank you for listening