

Date: January 30, 2022

From: Amy Curry, MD

Ref: Support for excluding fentanyl test strips from the definition of "drug paraphernalia" in HB 2277

Senate Judiciary Committee

Chairwoman Warren and Members of the Committee,

My name is Amy Curry and I am a Family Medicine physician practicing in Wichita Ks. I am writing to strongly encourage you to update the paraphernalia law with the amendment in HB 2277 excluding Fentanyl test strips from paraphernalia categorization

Unintentional overdoses from products laced with Fentanyl is a growing problem in Kansas. I am on faculty at the KU Family Medicine Residency Program at Ascension Via Christi. We provide care to hospitalized patients who are "unassigned" meaning they have no primary care physician. We are seeing more unintentional overdoses due to Fentanyl in this population. We have seen these in patients chronically abusing illegal substances as well as adolescents just experimenting with drugs for the first time.

Think back to the first time you or your teenager may have experimented with illegal substances, smoked a joint in a college dorm room or took a pill at a friend's party. What if that had been laced with Fentanyl? It would not have taken your opioid naive body long to quickly succumb to its potent effects. And then, what if your friends, realizing their mistake, just left you, instead of calling 911, afraid of the consequences of being found associated with a death involving drugs? This scenario is being played out repeatedly around our nation and state.

As a physician I would love for people not to be using illegal substances. I would also love for my patients to not be smoking cigarettes, eating unhealthy diets or drinking too much alcohol. Sometimes we just have to meet people where they are at and do all we can to help them make healthy choices.

Decriminalizing fentanyl test stripes is not unlike printing warnings on the harms of using tobacco on cigarette products. They both allow consumers to make an informed choice about the substance they are about to use. The difference is that one could kill them in minutes, not take years.

Thank you for your consideration of this important amendment. Regardless of your decision, I would also like to say thank you for all the hard work you are doing in service to our state and its people. I know it must often feel unappreciated but I am grateful for it.

Sincerely,

Amy Curry, MD

Associate Clinical Professor

KU School of Medicine-Wichita