

January 20, 2024
House Human Services Committee
HB 1203
Rep. Matthew Ruby, Chair

For the record, I am Stephanie Dassinger Engebretson. I am appearing on behalf of the Chiefs of Police Association of North Dakota. I am also the deputy director and attorney for the North Dakota League of Cities.

The Chiefs of Police are in opposition to HB 1203 and want to share some concerns they have about introducing an edible product into the medical marijuana program.

When our North Dakota Chiefs of Police talk to chiefs from other jurisdictions where marijuana is legal, the most troubling product that is available is edibles. The reasons for this are two-fold: 1. Edibles is the most common form of marijuana product that children consume¹; and 2. There is a delayed impact between consuming the edible marijuana product and the user feeling the effects of the marijuana.² This can result in the overconsumption of marijuana or the user consuming the edible product and starting an activity, such as driving, before experiencing the effects of the marijuana.

First, the Chiefs acknowledge the bills sponsor's effort to avoid situations where the edibles may appear in products attractive to children. The bill already restricts the edible marijuana product to being a square lozenge and requires that the product not be marketed to children.

To enhance the protections for children, the Chiefs recommend requiring that edible marijuana products be stored by qualifying patients, in places where children are present, in a locked location. Also, this committee may want to consider limits that do not allowed any edible lozenge to be flavored to avoid children finding they enjoy the flavor if they do encounter it.

To address the delayed impact of a marijuana edible product, the Chiefs suggest that there be a requirement added that some sort of educational material, like a pamphlet, be provided to qualifying patients when they purchase the edible marijuana product. Hopefully, this will ensure that those qualifying patients understand how the edible marijuana product may interact with their bodies.

¹ According to data gathered by the Rocky Mountain High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area, 66% of the marijuana exposures in 0-8 year olds was edibles

² According to an article entitled Tasty THC: Promises and Challenges of Cannabis Edibles, available at <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5260817/>, "The lack of consistency and the delayed intoxication may cause both new and experienced users of cannabis to consume higher than intended amounts of the drug. Edible products are responsible for the majority of health care visits due to cannabis intoxication, which is likely due to the failure of users to appreciate the delayed effects."