



February 27, 2024

Professional Distinction

Personal Dignity

Patient Advocacy

Representative Kaela Berg
577 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Senator Jen McEwen
95 University Avenue W, Room 3217
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Senator McEwen and Representative Berg,

On behalf of the Minnesota Nurses Association (MNA), I am writing to you today to express MNA's strong support for SF3948/HF4011, the surgical smoke evacuation legislation. MNA's 22,000+ members represent 4 out of 5 nurses that work at the bedside in hospitals across the state and this is an issue our members are particularly familiar with on a personal and professional level.

Nurses make a career out of taking care of the health of others. Many of these nurses do so by working in operating rooms day in and day out where their health is not protected from the dangers of surgical smoke. Like cigarette smoke, surgical smoke can be seen and smelled. It is the result of human tissue contact with lasers and electrosurgical pencils commonly used for dissection and hemostasis during surgery. It is prevalent in approximately 90% of surgeries and is full of carcinogenic and mutagenic cells that can include over 150 hazardous chemicals.

The average daily impact of surgical smoke to the Operating Room (OR) team is equivalent to inhaling the smoke of 27-30 unfiltered cigarettes. In fact, perioperative nurses, the OR team members who spend the most time in the OR, report twice as many respiratory issues as compared to the general population.

MNA urges you to adopt this legislation this session to protect patients, nurses and other medical professionals impacted by surgical smoke. Now is the time for action.

Sincerely,

Shannon Cunningham
Director of Governmental and Community Relations
Minnesota Nurses Association

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