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October 15, 2018

Members of the City Council
City of St. Paul
15 W Kellogg Blvd,
St Paul, MN 55102

Dear Members of the St. Paul City Council,

I am writing on behalf of the Twin Cities Medical Society to oppose the variance allowing the currently closed Little Grocery Store at 1724 University Avenue West to re-open as a tobacco shop. The Twin Cities Medical Society is an organization that represents approximately 4,500 physicians and medical students living and working in the seven-county Twin Cities metropolitan area. Our physician members share all too often that tobacco is still a problem in our communities. Tobacco use remains the #1 cause of preventable disease and death in Minnesota and costs the state over \$3 billion in excess medical costs each year.

Twin Cities Medical Society (TCMS) and our members were strong supporters St. Paul's menthol ordinance, as were numerous other health organizations including the Minnesota Medical Association, Minnesota Academy of Family Physicians, the Advance Practice Registered Nursing Coalition and the Minnesota Public Health Association. The intent of the menthol ordinance was to restrict access to tobacco, thereby reducing youth tobacco use and preventing tobacco related death and disease, not to create an opportunity for new tobacco shops to inundate our neighborhoods.

The proposed shop clearly does not meet the requirement for spacing from an existing tobacco shop, and does not align with the intent of St. Paul's menthol tobacco ordinance or tobacco license cap. Furthermore, an additional tobacco shop does not support our shared vision of vibrant and healthy city. I hope that you will uphold the intent of previous tobacco ordinances by opposing this variance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Kottke MD". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Tom Kottke, MD
President of the Twin Cities Medical Society