A bill for an act
relating to health; creating a public awareness campaign on the health dangers of
using skin lightening creams containing mercury; appropriating money.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

Section 1. SKIN LIGHTENING PRODUCTS PUBLIC AWARENESS AND
EDUCATION GRANT PROGRAM.

Subdivision 1. Establishment; purpose. The commissioner of health shall develop a
grant program for the purpose of increasing public awareness and education on the health
dangers associated with using skin lightening creams and products that contain mercury
that are manufactured in other countries and brought into this country and sold illegally
online or in stores.

Subd. 2. Grants authorized. The commissioner shall award grants through a request
for proposal process to community-based organizations serving ethnic communities, local
public health entities, and nonprofit organizations that focus on providing health care and
public health outreach to minorities. Priority shall be given to organizations that have
historically served ethnic communities at significant risk from these products, but have not
traditionally had access to state grant funding.

Subd. 3. Grant allocation. (a) Grantees must use the funds to conduct public awareness
and education activities that are culturally specific and community-based and focus on:
(1) the dangers of exposure to mercury through dermal absorption, inhalation,
hand-to-mouth contact, and through contact with individuals who have used these skin
lightening products;
(2) the signs and symptoms of mercury poisoning;

(3) the health effects of mercury poisoning, including the permanent effects on the central nervous system and kidneys;

(4) the dangers of using these products or being exposed to these products during pregnancy and breastfeeding to the mother and to the infant;

(5) knowing how to identify products that contain mercury; and

(6) proper disposal of the product if the product contains mercury.

(b) The grant application must include:

(1) a description of the purpose or project for which the grant funds will be used;

(2) a description of the objectives, a work plan, and a timeline for implementation; and

(3) the community or group the grant proposes to focus on.

(c) The commissioner shall award 50 percent of the grant funds to community-based organizations and nonprofit organizations and 50 percent of the funds to local public health entities.

Sec. 2. **APPROPRIATION.**

$....... in fiscal year 2022 and $....... in fiscal year 2023 are appropriated from the general fund to the commissioner of health for the skin lightening products public awareness and education grant program.