

Joint Position Statement on Indoor Tanning

July 2015

Indoor tanning (use of tanning devices) has become increasingly popular, especially with teenage girls and young women. By age 17, more than 35% of white females use tanning beds, of whom, 62% use them 10 or more times per year. There is clear and compelling scientific evidence that use of tanning devices is associated with an increased incidence of skin cancer including melanoma, basal cell cancer and squamous cell cancer. The World Health Organization's International Agency for Research on Cancer has classified UV radiation from tanning devices as carcinogenic to humans, in the same category as asbestos, tobacco, and plutonium. Adolescents and young adults are at increased risk of developing melanoma and other forms of skin cancer by using tanning beds. In view of these significant risks, 13* US states have passed legislation prohibiting indoor tanning for minors under 18 years of age, and several states have passed other restrictive legislation. Moreover, some countries (e.g., Australia and Brazil) have passed legislation that prohibits indoor tanning altogether.

Given the rising incidence of melanoma and non-melanoma skin cancer in the United States, as well as the increasing use of tanning devices for cosmetic purposes, we, the undersigned, strongly support:

- 1) State and federal legislation to prohibit the use of indoor tanning by minors under 18,
- 2) Educational efforts that effectively communicate the risks of indoor tanning to teens and their parents, and
- 3) Counter-advertising to de-normalize the perceived 'beauty' of tanned skin.

*Currently, 11 states have an under 18 prohibition without any exemptions, while 2 more prohibit use by minors but include an exemption for a physician prescription. However, there is no medical indication for the use of a tanning device in the diagnosis or treatment of a disease.



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