

**Testimony of the Connecticut Association of Directors of Health**  
*In Support of Raised Bill No. 54: An Act Concerning the Use of  
Indoor Tanning Devices by Persons Under Eighteen Years of Age*  
To the Distinguished Co-Chairs and Members of the Public Health Committee  
March 7, 2012

Good afternoon, Representative Ritter, Senator Gerratana and members of the Public Health Committee. My name is Patrick McCormack and I am President of the Connecticut Association of Directors of Health (CADH) and the Director of the Uncas Health District, serving the towns of Bozrah, Griswold, Lisbon, Montville, Norwich, Sprague, and Voluntown.

CADH supports *Raised Bill 54: An Act Concerning the Use of Indoor Tanning Devices by Persons Under Eighteen Years of Age* to protect a vulnerable population from the significant health risks associated with prolonged exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation.

It is well-established that the sunlamps used in tanning beds increase a user's risk of developing skin cancer, especially melanoma, the most deadly form of skin cancer. In July 2009, the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) moved tanning devices into the highest cancer risk category, "carcinogenic to humans." The decision was based on a review of 19 studies conducted over 25 years on the use of indoor tanning equipment. Prolonged exposure to UV radiation also causes premature aging, by causing the skin to lose elasticity and wrinkle prematurely; suppresses proper immune function; causes irreversible eye damage; and may trigger an allergic reaction in some individuals.<sup>1</sup>

Young adults make up a growing number of tanning bed customers. Not coincidentally, the American Academy of Dermatology reports that melanoma incidence rates have been increasing for at least 30 years, and melanoma is now the most common cancer in young adults 25 to 29 years old and the second most common form of cancer for adolescents and young adults 15 to 29 years old.<sup>2</sup> Accordingly, the IARC, the American Cancer Society, and the Skin Cancer Foundation all suggest restricting the use of tanning beds by minors.<sup>3</sup> California bans the use of tanning beds for individuals under 18 years of age, and some local jurisdictions have begun enacting such bans as well.<sup>4</sup>

*Raised Bill 54* protects a vulnerable and impressionable population that may be inappropriately influenced by societal pressures to tan, without fully appreciating the long-term dangers. Accordingly, CADH supports *Raised Bill 54* to protect Connecticut's youth from preventable adverse health outcomes. CADH is a nonprofit organization comprised of Connecticut's 77 local health departments and districts. Local health directors are the statutory agents of the Commissioner of Public Health and are critical providers of essential public health services at the local level in Connecticut. Thank you for your consideration.

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<sup>1</sup> Food and Drug Administration. *Indoor Tanning: The Risks of Ultraviolet Rays*. <http://www.fda.gov/downloads/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates/UCM190664.pdf>. Accessed March 2, 2012.

<sup>2</sup> American Academy of Dermatology. *Skin Cancer*. <http://www.aad.org/media-resources/stats-and-facts/conditions/skin-cancer>. Accessed March 2, 2012.

<sup>3</sup> Skin Cancer Foundation. *FDA Panel Weighs New Restrictions on Tanning Beds*. <http://www.skincancer.org/news/tanning/FDA-Panel-Weighs-New-Restrictions-on-Tanning-Beds>. Accessed March 1, 2012.

<sup>4</sup> National Conference of State Legislatures. *Tanning Restrictions for Minors - A State-by-State Comparison*. <http://www.ncsl.org/issues-research/health/tanning-restrictions-for-minors.aspx>. Accessed March 1, 2012.