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March 14, 2013

Dear Senator Gerratana, Representative Johnson and Members of the Public Health Committee,

RE: S.B. No 872
AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF TANNING DEVICES TO PERSONOS
UNDER THE EIGHTEEN YEARS OLD

I am writing on behalf of the Melanoma Foundation New England and melanoma patients in the state Connecticut, who are struggling with this deadly disease, to ask that you support S.B. No 872. On behalf of the Melanoma Foundation New England, I urge the legislative body and the Governor to take this opportunity to protect the health of Connecticut's most fragile youth.

The mission of the Melanoma Foundation New England is to reduce the risk of melanoma through education and early detection and to support those struggling with melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer.

I'd like to share the story of one high school girl who we met last year as part of our *Your Skin Is In Program*. This program targets teens and young adults, building awareness about the dangers of intentional tanning both indoors and in tanning beds.

We met this teen, who I'll call Tanya. Tanya had refused to take a pledge not to tan for the prom, but had some interest in finding out if the stories she was reading about the dangers of tanning had any truth.

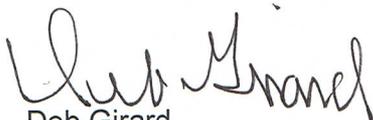
Tanya tanned outside when the weather permitted but at 17 was going to a tanning bed 3-4 times each week. She needed the glow of a tan and the increase of energy that she perceived. After hearing from young melanoma survivors about their use of tanning beds and their now life long journey with melanoma, Tanya was willing to rethink her indoor tanning behavior. If the proposed ban was in place, Tanya would not be able to take the risk of tanning.

Here are the facts

- Melanoma is the most common form of cancer for young adults 25-29 years old.

- Even minimal exposure to UV radiation from tanning beds before the age of 35 can increase the risk of developing melanoma by 75 percent. Melanoma is rising amongst young women and **one American dies every hour** from this disease.
- In addition to these known risks new evidence demonstrates that ever-use of indoor tanning beds is associated with a **69%** increased risk of early-onset basal cell carcinoma (BCC), the most common form of skin cancer. Risk of developing BCC was higher in those who begin indoor tanning at earlier ages (less than 16 years old).
- Prohibiting the use of indoor tanning devices for all minors under the age of 18 is critical to preventing future skin cancers as survey data indicate use of these devices increases with each year of adolescence.
- Nationally, indoor tanning rates among 14-, 15-, 16-, and 17-year-old girls in the past year were 5%, 13.6%, 20.9%, and 26.8%, respectively.
- In the other New England states Vt has passed a bill banning tanning by minors, RI has passed bill requiring parental consent for all tanning bed use by minors ME and MA have proposed legislation to ban tanning by minors

Skin cancer and melanoma are increasing in epidemic numbers in our most fragile youth. It is our job to protect the health of young people. Please consider legislation to ban tanning by minors


Deb Girard
Executive Director