



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

TESTIMONY PRESENTED BEFORE THE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE March 15, 2013

Jewel Mullen, MD, MPH, MPA, Commissioner, 860-509-7101

Senate Bill 872 - An Act Concerning the Use of Indoor Tanning Devices By Persons Under Eighteen Years of Age

The Department of Public Health supports Senate Bill 872. This bill prohibits the use of indoor tanning devices by persons under age eighteen, except with a physician's referral.

In 2009, the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), a working group of the World Health Organization, added ultraviolet (UV) radiation-emitting tanning devices (including tanning beds and lamps) to the list of the most dangerous forms of cancer-causing radiation.¹ Indoor tanning has been linked with skin cancers including melanoma (the deadliest type of skin cancer), squamous cell carcinoma, and cancers of the eye (ocular melanoma). Research shows that tanning is especially hazardous to young people. Those who use sunbeds before age 35 increase their lifetime risk of melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer, by 75 percent.²

According to the 2011 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 13% of all high school students and 21% of high school girls report indoor tanning use. Additionally, 32% of high school girls in the 12th grade report indoor tanning.³ Given the increased risk of melanoma among those who first use a tanning bed before the age of 35, restricting the age of first tanning bed use should reduce melanoma risk later in life. Prohibiting the use of indoor tanning devices by persons under age eighteen (except with a physician's referral) would be one component of a multi-pronged approach aimed at reducing the number of people, both youth and adults, at risk for diseases associated with indoor tanning use. Other strategies include monitoring indoor tanning use and prevention policies; warning about the dangers of indoor tanning use; and, raising taxes on indoor tanning services.⁴

This bill promotes a policy that makes good public health sense and should reduce melanoma risk later in life. Thank you for your consideration of the Department's views on this bill.

1 El Ghissassi F, Baan R, Straif K, Grosse Y, Secretan B, Bouvard V, et al. A review of human carcinogens – part D: radiation. *Lancet Oncol* 2009;10(8):751-2.

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- 2 International Agency for Research on Cancer Working Group on Artificial Ultraviolet (UV) Light and Skin Cancer. The association of use of sunbeds with cutaneous malignant melanoma and other skin cancers: A systematic review. *International Journal of Cancer* 2007;120(5):1116–1122.
- 3 Eaton DK, Kann L, Kinchen S, Shanklin S, Flint KH, Hawkins J, Harris WA, Lowry R, McManus T, Chyen D, Whittle L, Lim C, Wechsler H. Youth risk behavior surveillance—United States, 2011. *MMWR Surveillance Summaries* 2012;61(4):1–162.
- 4 Sinclair C, Makin JK. Implications of Lesson Learned From Tobacco Control for Tanning Bed Reform. *Prev Chronic Dis* 2013;10:120186. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5888/pcd10.120186>.

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