

**Testimony of the Connecticut Association of Directors of Health**  
*In Support of Raised Bill No. 872: 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 15, 2013

Good afternoon, Distinguished Co-Chairs and Members of the Public Health Committee. My name is Karen Spargo and I am the President of the Connecticut Association of Directors of Health (CADH) and the Director of the Naugatuck Valley Health District, serving the towns of Ansonia, Beacon Falls, Derby, Naugatuck, Seymour, and Shelton.

CADH supports *Raised Bill 872: 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> Accordingly, Healthy People 2020 has included the reduction of indoor tanning among minors in its national objectives.<sup>2</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>3</sup> Accordingly, the IARC, the American Cancer Society, and the Skin Cancer Foundation all suggest restricting the use of tanning beds by minors.<sup>4</sup> California and Vermont ban the use of tanning beds for individuals under 18 years of age, and some local jurisdictions have begun enacting such bans as well.<sup>5</sup>

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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 13, 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <http://m.cdc.gov/en/HealthSafetyTopics/DiseasesConditions/Cancer/Skin/indoorTanning>. Accessed March 13, 2013.

<sup>3</sup> American Academy of Dermatology. *Skin Cancer*. <http://www.aad.org/media-resources/stats-and-facts/conditions/skin-cancer>. Accessed March 13, 2013.

<sup>4</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 13, 2013.

<sup>5</sup> National Conference of State Legislatures. *Tanning Restrictions for Minors- A State-by-State Comparison*. <http://www.ncsl.org/issues-research/health/indoor-tanning-restrictions.aspx>. Accessed March 13, 2013.

CADH supports the enforcement provisions as drafted, specifically:

- (1) The language that provides that fines levied be paid to the municipal health department or district department of health for the municipality in which an offending tanning facility is located, which will enhance the capacity of local health departments to enforce any ban passed; and
- (2) The language stating that any municipal health department or district department of health may, within its available resources, enforce such a ban, allowing flexibility in a challenging fiscal climate for local health officials to strategically allocate resources to optimize health services for the communities they serve.

Finally, though CADH supports any ban as better than none, bill language would be improved by removing the medical exception clause. Indoor tanning is not an acceptable alternative to phototherapy, according to the Connecticut Society of Dermatology.<sup>6</sup> UV devices may prove to be therapeutically valuable in treating skin conditions such as psoriasis and eczema. However, the types of UV devices found in physician's offices are more strictly regulated than those found in tanning salons.<sup>7</sup> We encourage the Public Health Committee to remove this exception.

*Raised Bill 872* 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 872* to protect Connecticut's youth from preventable adverse health outcomes. CADH is a nonprofit organization comprised of Connecticut's 74 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>6</sup> Connecticut Society of Dermatology. *Indoor Tanning Position Statement*.  
<http://ctdermatologysociety.org/images/CDS%20Position%20on%20Indoor%20Tanning%20Position%20Statement.pdf>.  
Accessed March 14, 2013.

<sup>7</sup> *Id.*