



February 12, 2013

The Honorable Senator Terry B. Gerrantana
Chairman, Public Health Committee
Legislative Office Building
Room 3000
Hartford, CT 06106-1591

RE: Support HB 5108

Dear Chairman Gerrantana,

As President of the American Society for Dermatologic Surgery Association (ASDSA), a surgical specialty organization representing over 5,700 physician members, I am writing to urge yourself and your colleagues on the Public Health Committee to support HB 5108. This bill will prohibit the use of tanning devices by minors under the age of 18 without parental consent. Stricter indoor tanning regulations are necessary to protect teenagers from the dangers posed by the ultraviolet radiation emitted from indoor tanning devices.

Recent studies show a disturbing trend – there is a steady rise in the number of young women diagnosed with melanoma, and at more advanced stages. It is not coincidental that this demographic is also significantly more likely to use tanning beds than their male counterparts.

Indoor Tanning is ranked within the World Health Organization's highest cancer-risk category. In 2009, the International Agency for Research on Cancer, the cancer division of the World Health Organization, classified tanning beds as "carcinogenic to humans" — the agency's highest cancer-risk category, which also includes asbestos, plutonium, and tobacco smoking. Total doses of ultraviolet rays from a tanning bed may be as much as five times more than natural sunlight, meaning that just 20 minutes spent in a tanning salon may be equal to 2-3 hours in the noontime sun, according to a 2008 scientific article from *Dermatologic Surgery*.¹

Acknowledging the popularity of indoor tanning amongst teens, the World Health Organization and the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection have recommended that indoor tanning be restricted to only those ages eighteen and older.

Indoor tanning is a threat to the health and safety of our youth with no signs of slowing down. A 2006 study of the 100 most populous cities in the United States found that there was an average of 42 tanning salons per city—exceeding the number of Starbucks or McDonald's. The same study demonstrated that 76% of teens lived within two miles of a tanning salon.² Not only are minors more susceptible to misinformation about indoor tanning, minors are increasing their use of indoor tanning devices and consequently, increasing their incidence of melanoma.

Melanoma, the most deadly form of skin cancer, has been repeatedly linked to indoor tanning. As a common cause of melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer, consumers

¹ Ibrahim, S; Brown, M; Tanning and Cutaneous Malignancy. *Dermatol Surg*. 2008;34:460–474.

²2006: Number of Tanning Salons. CITY 100: Controlling Indoor Tanning in Youth. Retrieved from: <http://indoortanningreportcard.com/numberofsalons.html>

should be protected from the sea of misinformation about this dangerous activity. A scientific paper entitled *Recent Tanning Bed Use: A Risk Factor for Melanoma* stated that sun or UV radiation is one of the primary causal factors in the development of melanoma and that indoor tanning increases one's risk of melanoma.³

The Federal Trade Commission has ruled against claiming health benefits for indoor tanning. Members of the indoor tanning industry have tried repeatedly to discredit the medical research linking indoor tanning to cancer, instead advertising health benefits, including the prevention of lung, kidney, and liver cancers through use of UV devices. In a 2010 ruling, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) found that such claims constitute unfair or deceptive acts or practices, and that the making of false advertisements, in or affecting commerce is in violation of the Federal Trade Commission Act.⁴

Model legislation has passed in California and Vermont. On October 9, 2011, California passed SB 746, becoming the first state to ban the use of indoor tanning beds for all minors under the age of 18. Vermont passed HB 157 on May 2, 2012, banning minors from tanning. Nationwide, 33 states have enacted some level of indoor tanning prohibitions for minors. Of the 17 states with no indoor tanning prohibitions for minors, 8 states (including Washington DC) considered an indoor tanning bill in the previous (2011-2012) legislative session.

The ASDSA urges you to support HB 5108. This is an issue focusing on public health and wellness, public education, and public safety. By passing this bill, the state is proactively committed to protecting its citizens from additional risk from skin cancer, and helping educate the public on the risks of any level of exposure to artificially-emitted ultraviolet radiation.

I urge you to support this act in committee, and to send this bill to the House floor for a vote with favorable support. Should you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact John Geahan, Public Policy Specialist, at (847) 956-9121, or by email at jgeahan@asds.net.

Sincerely,



Timothy C. Flynn, MD
President

cc: Mitchel P. Goldman, MD, President-Elect, ASDSA
George J. Hruza, MD, Vice President, ASDSA
Thomas E. Rohrer, MD, Secretary, ASDSA
Abel Torres, MD, Treasurer, ASDSA
Susan H. Weinkle, MD, Immediate Past President, ASDSA
Katherine J. Duerdoth, CAE, Executive Director, ASDSA
Lisle Soukup, Director of Advocacy and Public Policy, ASDSA
The Honorable State Representative Al Adinolfi

³ Buckel, T; et al; Recent Tanning Bed Use: A Risk Factor for Melanoma. *Arch Dermatol.* 2006; 142: 485-488.

⁴ File No. 082-3159; United States of America Federal Trade Commission Complaint in the Matter of Indoor Tanning Association, a Corporation.