

SB 872

Written Testimony of the Tim Callahan, Director of Health City of Norwalk

*In Support of Raised Bill No. 872: An Act Concerning the Use of
Indoor Tanning Devices by Persons Under Eighteen Years of Age*

March 15, 2013

To the Co-Chairs and Members of the Public Health Committee

You will hear many sound reasons for banning children under the age of 18 from using indoor tanning devices. The research findings are alarming. Rather than repeat the statistics, I will share my experiences with passing regulations governing indoor tanning.

In 2012 the City of Norwalk Common Council enacted an ordinance aimed at reducing access to tanning devices by children, raising the awareness to the negative health consequences users of these devices face, and requiring tanning device operators to maintain their equipment and their facilities.

The impetus for adopting a tanning ordinance came from the Norwalk Board of Health. We reviewed the findings of numerous studies highlighting the relationship between indoor tanning and a corresponding increase in the incidence of melanoma. Most compelling was anecdotal evidence collected during focus groups with Norwalk high school aged children. They told us the use of indoor tanning devices was common among their peers. The Board of Health members concluded that for a variety of reasons most youngsters do not understand the serious health implications indoor tanning poses, particularly since the consequences are not apparent until later in life. Therefore the Board members strongly supported establishing regulations governing indoor tanning.

Our process for adopting an ordinance includes conducting a public hearing. The Ordinance Committee of the Common Council discussed this matter at 2 regular meetings and conducted a public hearing. Health Department staff contacted all of eight the facilities in town to make the owners aware of the public hearing. Only people in support of this regulation attended and spoke at the public hearing. The ordinance was unanimously passed by the Common Council.

The ordinance has been in effect for one year. The establishment owners are complying with the requirements. At least one, Crunch Fitness, a national franchise, follows a company policy which prohibits use of tanning beds by anyone under the age of 18.

The idea of extending our local ban from 16 year olds to 18 year olds was discussed. We opted to move forward and revisit this matter at a later date. There is support to move ahead in Norwalk. We hope your passage of this bill will make our action unnecessary. I fully support that passage of Bill # 872.

Regards

Tim Callahan
Director of Health City of Norwalk