

My name is Aaron Smith and I currently live in Oxford CT and I am testifying in support of SB219 An Act Concerning Indoor Tanning. I'm currently a stage 3B Melanoma patient awaiting lung surgery to remove what is a probable metastasized Melanoma nodule in my left lung bringing me to stage 4B. In 2 weeks I will turn 54 years old and I'm not ready for cancer to end my life. I grew up in the 70's running around outside without a care in the world and without any knowledge of what UV rays could do to me years later. I remember getting sunburns as a child but thought nothing of their lasting effects. When I was 18 I joined the Navy and spent years in the Hawaiian and Florida sun getting as dark as I could. When I couldn't sustain a natural tan I spent time and money in the tanning booths. Fast forward 30 years and now I know what can happen.

My daughter and her husband had their first child (our first Grandchild) and bought their first home so I volunteered to help re-paint their house. During this project I scraped the large mole on my back that my wife had asked me to get checked out and it started to lightly bleed. When the mole never healed I finally agreed to have someone look at it. So on September 5, 2017 I got the call from my Dermatologist to inform me the mole tested positive for Melanoma. Sept 27, 2017 I was in a surgery suite at Yale New Haven Hospital removing 10 Sentinel Lymph Nodes and an Ulcerated Malignant Melanoma tumor approximately 3 x 1.4 x .5 cm resulting in a scar about 10" long. During my post surgery meeting I was informed my nodal biopsy showed the cancer had spread to my Lymph Nodes and was immediately referred to an Oncologist. As a society we try to help the next generation by doing away with things that will cause them harm or regulate their use until they reach adulthood. We put our children in car seats, we don't allow our children to smoke or drink until they are old enough to decide the facts themselves. Tanning beds at a minimum should be restricted to adults over the age of 18 and the fact that we allow the use of tanning beds period is just setting someone up for a life that I'm now calling my new normal. CT\PET scans every 3 months, along with body scans, massive invasive surgeries, sleepless nights, constant stress about the next test results, enduring countless IV Immunotherapies all with the possibility it could cause my death.

According to the World Health Organization's International Agency for Research on Cancer places tanning beds and tanning lamps into the highest cancer risk category – carcinogenic to humans, the same category as other hazardous substances such as plutonium and certain types of radium. Please take a stand today to protect our children and grandchildren with the passage of SB219. I wish I would have known what I know now as I would have done things much different. I again hope to see my little Grandson Jackson graduate college get married and have a healthy life without Melanoma caused by tanning.

Thank you,

Aaron M. Smith  
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