

Public Health Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-922

AN ACT ALLOWING STUDENTS TO APPLY SUNSCREEN PRIOR TO

Title: ENGAGING IN OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES.

Vote Date: 3/8/2019

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/4/2019

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Public Health Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

This legislation enables students eight years and older to apply sunscreen with parental consent. Currently, sunscreen is included in the state's medication ban and therefore, students need a physician's note to apply sunscreen. This bill would allow school boards to pass regulations on sunscreen application in schools.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None submitted.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Dr. Stephen Ariyan, Connecticut State Medical Society (CSMS): Dr. Ariyan and CSMS are in favor of the bill. Skin cancer is the most predominant form of cancer in the country. Of the types of skin cancer, melanoma is the most aggressive. The rate of developing melanoma has grown significantly over the last few decades, with the risk increasing by fifteen times since 1960. Currently, it is believed that 4-5% of individuals will develop some form of melanoma in their lifetime. Melanoma is a preventable cancer and results from skin damage caused by sun exposure. Dr. Ariyan cited a report from the Surgeon General, which urges provisions be implemented to allow children to apply sunscreen in school. In addition to the recommendations for children, the report also called for greater sun protection throughout the general population.

Dr. Gary Price, Connecticut State Medical Society (CSMS): Skin cancer and melanoma are significant public health concerns. They are preventable through minimizing exposure to the sun and artificial sources of UV radiation. According to Dr. Price, 40-80% of sun exposure occurs before an individual turns eighteen. This highlights the significance of minimizing harmful sun exposure in children and ensuring that they are protected. 44% of schools in the United States allow students to apply sunscreen on their own and countries like Australia have implemented programs to reduce sun exposure in children. Dr. Price also cited the Surgeon General's report, which encourages state and local governments to implement policies to reduce sun exposure (though primarily through structural developments).

The Connecticut Society of Eye Physicians et al.: The medical societies referenced in the testimony are in strong support of the bill. More than 2 million individuals develop skin cancer annually. In 2009, more than 9,000 people died as a result of melanoma. In addition, the societies ask that the language of the bill be amended to include provisions for a working group comprised of experts from organizations such as the Connecticut State Medical Society, the American Cancer Association, and the CT Dermatology and Dermatologic Surgery. Their input will help to educate citizens on the effect of UV exposure. The societies also urge the committee to consider the state's indoor tanning statute to limit the harmful UV exposure for individuals under the age of eighteen. The testimony included reports and studies from various sources, highlighting the impact of UV exposure.

Carlos Gutierrez, Vice President, State and Local Government Affairs, Consumer Healthcare Products Association (CHPA): The CHPA is in strong support of the bill. Due to medication bans in schools, students are required to present a prescription from their physician in order to apply sunscreen in school. Allowing students to carry sunscreen is an effective method of preventing sunburn and potentially skin cancer. Currently, nineteen states have enacted legislation that would allow students to apply sunscreen in schools. Sunscreen is considered over-the-counter by the Food and Drug Administration and usage is highly encouraged, as one severe sunburn can double the risk of a child developing skin cancer as an adult. Exposure to UV builds up over time and therefore it is crucial to reduce exposure early in life. It is even more urgent in Connecticut, as the state consistently ranks among the high UV index states.

SUNucate Coalition: The Coalition offers strong support for the legislation. Although the intention of prohibiting children from applying sunscreen is meant to protect students, it also places them at risk for sun damage. It is crucial that people use sunscreen at a young age to prevent skin cancer. In addition, the American Medical Association has put forth a policy encouraging schools to allow their students to apply sunscreen without restrictions. Allowing students to apply sunscreen is a matter of public safety.

16 additional pieces of testimony were submitted in support of SB 922.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None submitted.

Reported by: Meagan Schantz

Date: 3/12/19

