

# MedChi

*The Maryland State Medical Society*

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TO: The Honorable Peter A. Hammen, Chair  
Members, House Health & Government Operations Committee  
The Honorable Kirill Reznik

FROM: Joseph A. Schwartz, III  
Pamela Metz Kasemeyer  
J. Steven Wise  
Danna L. Kauffman

DATE: February 5, 2015

RE: **SUPPORT** – House Bill 56 – *Tanning Devices – Use by Minors – Prohibition*

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The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), which represents over 8,000 Maryland physicians and their patients, supports House Bill 56.

House Bill 56 will preclude minors from using tanning beds which – as all available medical evidence establishes – materially increases the prospect of skin cancer and particularly melanoma which is the deadliest form of skin cancer. Indoor tanning beds should be “off limits” to minors in the same way that we place cigarettes and alcohol “off limits” to them. The passage of House Bill 56 will extend the present law in Howard County, Maryland to the rest of the state. The Howard County prohibition, which has been in effect since 2009, has been accepted and enforced by the tanning industry with no appreciable loss of business opportunity.

The indoor tanning industry has argued, in other states, that there are “health benefits” from using indoor tanning beds. These claims are in direct violation of a January 2010 Consent Order that the Indoor Tanning Association and its affiliates entered into with the Federal Trade Commission which Consent Order forbids them from making health benefit claims in their advertisements without giving warnings about skin cancer. Indeed, the Consent Order requires them to give “Warnings” similar to the warnings which are required on cigarette packages. Despite this Consent Order, the tanning bed industry continues to provide false and misleading health information to teens as documented in the Investigative Report of the Minority Staff of the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Energy and Commerce dated February 1, 2012.

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The medical evidence is overwhelming that the use of tanning beds by minors materially increases the risk of cancer.

Finally, MedChi doctors report that there are additional health problems besides the skin cancer episodes which are so well known. Dr. Steven Lenowitz, an OB-GYN, related to the MedChi Legislative Committee about the recent increases in cases of “molluscum contagiosum” that he was seeing in young girls using tanning beds. **“I feel that these girls are tanning nude to avoid tan lines and this viral illness is being spread unsuspectingly to these innocent girls, many of whom are minors. The sterilization techniques are abominable involving a quick spray and a wipe of these fomites of infection. I can honestly say that I have not seen this infection except in girls that regularly frequent tanning salons. I would be curious to see if Herpes or HPV could be spread this way as well. I think this is a cause for great concern in addition to the harmful carcinogenic ultraviolet ray.”**

MedChi strongly supports House Bill 56 given the demonstrated and undisputed health issues relating to the use of indoor tanning beds.

**For more information call:**

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