



Maryland Chapter

TO: The Honorable Dereck Davis, Chairman
Members, House Economic Matters Committee
The Honorable William Bronrott

FROM: Joseph A. Schwartz, III
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J. Steven Wise

DATE: March 23, 2010

RE: **SUPPORT** – House Bill 1039 – *Tanning Devices – Use by Minors - Prohibition*

On behalf of MedChi, the Maryland State Medical Society and the Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, we support House Bill 1039.

House Bill 1039 would prohibit a minor from using a tanning device and prohibits the owner, employee, or operator of a tanning facility from distributing to a minor a pass, coupon, or package redeemable for use of a tanning device. In 2008, the General Assembly enacted House Bill 1358 which prohibited a minor from using a tanning device without the express consent of a parent or guardian. Since the passage of the legislation however, the World Health Organization (WHO) and other scientific and health care organizations have strengthened their recommendations with respect to the known health risks associated with tanning devices, particularly for minors.

It is well documented that adolescent girls are particularly attracted to tanning beds and sunlamps and medical evidence is conclusive that indoor tanning increases the risk of cancer and particularly the most dangerous type of skin cancer, melanoma, especially when the tanning bed use begins at an early age. Indeed, in July 2009, the WHO reclassified tanning beds and UV radiation as carcinogenic. Until this reclassification, tanning beds and UV radiation were considered “probably carcinogenic to humans.” WHO reclassified tanning beds and UV radiation after a comprehensive analysis that concluded that the risk of skin melanoma is increased by 75% when people start using tanning beds prior to age 35. WHO recommends banning tanning bed use for people younger than age 18.

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Typically, indoor tanning lamps emit ultraviolet radiation levels that can be as much as 15 times stronger than the sun. The International Agency for Research on Cancer has concluded that there is a clear increase in melanoma risk associated with the use of tanning beds during the teens and twenties. Melanoma is of particular concern since it is the most common cancer in young women age 25- 29.

MedChi has a particular interest in skin cancer prevention and it is a major project of the Center For Healthy Maryland which is an affiliate of MedChi (www.medchi.org). The Maryland Skin Cancer Prevention Program was established in 1997 by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and has been funded since 2001 by a grant from Maryland's Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. The purpose of the program is to further awareness and prevention of skin cancer with a major emphasis on the elementary and middle school children. It is well documented that young people, particularly adolescents, are at risk for skin cancer and this is particularly true when they use commercial tanning beds.

In 2009, Howard County banned the use of tanning beds by minors. House Bill 1039 will ensure that all minors are afforded the protection of this prohibition. MedChi and MDAAP would ask for a favorable report on House Bill 1039.

For more information call:

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