

House Bill 159 – Proponent Testimony
Ohio House Health Committee
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Chairman Lipps, Vice Chair Holmes, Ranking Member Russo, and members of the Ohio House Health Committee, thank you for allowing me to provide testimony in support of House Bill 159, which would prohibit the use of sun lamp tanning services to individuals under the age of 18 in Ohio. My name is Joan Tamburro, and I am a pediatric dermatologist at Cleveland Clinic Children’s.

Cleveland Clinic Children’s offers inpatient and outpatient diagnosis, consultation and treatment for newborns, infants, children and adolescents. We see patients at Cleveland Clinic’s main campus and throughout the family health centers all across Northeast Ohio. In my role as a pediatric dermatologist at Cleveland Clinic Children’s, I specialize in common skin, hair and nail disorders, as well as complex genetic and infectious dermatologic complications. We provide clinical evaluation, diagnostic biopsies and advanced therapies when needed. Part of my work involves treating adolescents who have been diagnosed with skin cancer.

Melanoma is a type of skin cancer that develops in the pigmented cells in the skin. Melanoma is the deadliest form of skin cancer and is responsible for more than 9,000 deaths in the United States each year, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

A recent study that looked at the potential impact of tanning beds shows that reducing indoor tanning could reduce the number of people developing melanoma, the number of people dying from melanoma, and the costs of treating this deadly disease. The study, published online in the Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology, focused on people younger than age 18.

Young people are especially sensitive to the ultraviolet (UV) rays that tanning beds emit. The researchers estimated that restricting indoor tanning among minors under age 18 could prevent 61,839 cases of melanoma and prevent thousands of deaths each year.

Earlier research has shown that people who use tanning beds are 2.5 times more likely to develop squamous cell carcinoma and 1.5 times more likely to develop basal cell carcinoma. Even occasional sunbed use has been shown to almost triple your chances of developing melanoma. The study’s results are consistent with what doctors know about melanoma — the younger a person starts tanning, the higher their risk is of developing the disease.

Indoor tanning is a known risk factor for developing skin cancers, including melanoma. Just one instance of indoor tanning increases a person’s risk of developing melanoma by up to 79 percent.



Yet, according to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), more than 1.6 million teens tan indoors each year.

The longer you tan, the more hours you're under the lamp, the more sessions you go to and the number of years that you do that, all individually serve as risk factors for melanoma. Anyone can get melanoma. Despite all of the research that had been done on melanoma, many people still are misinformed about who can develop skin cancer and think that only fair-skinned people are at risk. Any type of skin can develop melanoma.

House Bill 159 can help in preventing skin cancer by restricting the number of teens who tan, and therefore greatly lessening their risk of developing melanoma and other skin cancers.

It is for these reasons that Cleveland Clinic voices its support for the passage of HB 159. We are thankful to the bill sponsors, Representative Brett Hillyer and Representative Mary Lightbody, for introducing this important bill.

Thank you, and I can be contacted to answer any questions you may have.