



**Dr. Natalie E. Joseph, M.D.,
Interim Director of the Cancer Center
The MetroHealth System
HB 169 -Proponent Testimony
House Health Provider Services Committee
June 27, 2023**

Chair Cutrona, Vice Chair Gross and Ranking Member Somani, thank you for providing The MetroHealth System located in Cleveland, Ohio with the opportunity to provide proponent testimony to House Bill 169, a Bill that will prohibit an operator or employee of a tanning facility from allowing a minor to use the facility's sun lamp tanning services.

My name is Dr. Natalie Joseph, MD and I am the Director of the Cancer Center at MetroHealth in Cleveland. We are the super safety-net health system for Cuyahoga County, caring for the most under resourced members of our community. MetroHealth's more than 8,200 employees provide care at four hospitals, four emergency departments, more than 20 health centers and 40 additional sites throughout Northeast Ohio. In the past year, MetroHealth has served 300,000 patients at more than 1.5 million visits. Seventy-five percent of our patients are uninsured or covered by Medicare or Medicaid.

A 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 6,735 deaths each year.

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, says the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

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 Ohio Department of Health's 2020 Cancer Report documented that there were 3,342 cases of melanoma in 2017, the most recent date for which this data is available. For that same year, 384 patients died because of melanoma. While the mortality rate may at first glance appear low, that is because most melanoma are discovered at earlier stages, thanks to a relatively robust public health system in active education, prevention, and screening for skin cancer. However, it can be argued that once a melanoma cell is no longer confined to the skin, cell for cell, it is perhaps the most aggressive malignancy known. That is because melanoma cells can potentially cross the blood brain barrier, metastasizing to the brain. It can even cross the placenta and metastasize to a yet-to-be-born child. Given all this evidence, I believe we should not increase the risk of inducing melanoma in our children by allowing sun lamp tanning services to be accessible to those too young to consent.



Chair Cutrona, Vice Chair Gross and Ranking Member Somani and members of the House Health Provider Services Committee, thank you for providing me the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on House Bill 169.