



Ohio Hematology Oncology Society
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May 24, 2023

The Honorable Steve Huffman
Chairman, Senate Health Committee
1 Capitol Square
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Chairman Huffman:

As Executive Director of the Ohio Hematology Oncology Society, I am writing to express our support for SB 59, legislation to prohibit the provision of sun lamp tanning services to individuals under the age of 18. The Ohio Hematology Oncology Society represents nearly 170 oncologists and hematologists in Ohio who treat cancer patients in both the private office (community) and hospital settings. Our members are located in rural, suburban and urban settings.

This legislation would protect the health and safety of Ohio's children by closing a loophole and prohibiting the use of sun lamp tanning services to people under the age of 18. Incidence rates for melanoma and skin cancer continue to climb. According to the American Cancer Society, one in five Americans will develop some form of skin cancer during their lifetime, and one American dies every hour from melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer.

People receive most of their dangerous lifetime exposure to UV radiation before the age of 18 when the skin is most vulnerable. As numerous studies indicate, skin cancer is closely associated with excessive UV light exposure before this age. This has dramatically increased since the advent of the tanning bed industry, with teenagers making up 25 percent of the 30 million tanning bed users in this country. It is estimated that at least one out of every five children will develop skin cancer in their lifetime.

The medical community has become increasingly concerned about the many hazardous effects of UV tanning bed radiation, including its link to skin cancer. Twenty years ago, there were approximately 500,000 new cases of skin cancer diagnosed each year in the United States. Recently, there have been more than one million new cases diagnosed annually with the number rising rapidly. Most of these skin cancers are preventable and represent half of the more than two million total cancers diagnosed every year. For these reasons, the American Cancer Society recommends that people avoid tanning beds.

As Chairman of the Ohio Senate Health Committee, you have the opportunity to facilitate the passage of this important public health measure that will help protect the well-being of Ohio's children. I urge you and the committee to support this important initiative.

Sincerely,

Michelle Weiss, CHONC
Executive Director

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