



Dr. Benjamin D. Li, MD
Division Director of Cancer Center
The MetroHealth System
HB 159 -Proponent Testimony
House Health Committee

Chair Lipps, Vice Chair Holmes and Ranking Member Russo, thank you for providing The MetroHealth System located in Cleveland, Ohio with the opportunity to provide proponent testimony to House Bill 159, 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. Benjamin D. Li, MD and I am the Director of the Cancer Center at MetroHealth in Cleveland. We are the safety-net health system for Cuyahoga County, caring for the most under resourced members of our community. MetroHealth's more than 7,800 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 1.4 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 Lipps, Vice Chair Holmes and Ranking Member Russo and members of the House Health Committee, thank you for providing me the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on Amended House Bill 159.

I'll be happy to answer any questions.

About The MetroHealth System

The MetroHealth System is redefining health care by going beyond medical treatment to improve the foundations of community health and well-being: affordable housing, a cleaner environment, economic opportunity and access to fresh food, convenient transportation, legal help and other services. The system strives to become as good at preventing disease as it is at treating it.

The system's more than 600 doctors, 1,700 nurses and 7,800 employees go to work each day with a mission of service, to their patients and to the community. As Cuyahoga County's safety-net health system, MetroHealth plays an essential role in the region, caring for anyone and everyone, regardless of an ability to pay.

Founded in 1837, MetroHealth operates four hospitals, four emergency departments and more than 20 health centers and 40 additional sites throughout Cuyahoga County. The system serves more than 300,000 patients, three-fourths of whom are uninsured or covered by Medicare or Medicaid.

MetroHealth is home to Cuyahoga County's most experienced Level I Adult Trauma Center, verified since 1992, and Ohio's only adult and pediatric trauma and burn center.

As an academic medical center, MetroHealth is committed to research and to teaching and training tomorrow's caregivers. Each active staff physician holds a faculty appointment at Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine. Its main campus hospital houses the Cleveland Metropolitan School District's Lincoln-West School of Science & Health, the only high school in America located inside a hospital.

Knowing that good health is about much more than good medical care, MetroHealth has launched the Institute for H.O.P.E.™ (Health, Opportunity, Partnership, Empowerment), which uses a coordinated, collaborative and strategic approach to help patients with non-medical needs such as healthy food, stable housing and job training.

The MetroHealth Glick Center, a new 11-floor hospital, is under construction on the system's main campus in Cleveland and is scheduled to welcome its first patients in October 2022. The billion-dollar project is the cornerstone of a wider neighborhood revitalization effort led by the system and its partners in the community.

For more information, visit metrohealth.org.