

Indoor tanning restrictions for minors

The Problem:

The hazardous effects of ultra violet (UV) radiation are undisputed: skin cancer formation, premature aging of the skin, cataract formation, impairment of the immune system, photosensitizing reaction with various drugs and initiation and or aggravation of certain systemic diseases. In fact, the toxic effects of excessive exposure to UV tanning bed radiation were confirmed recently when the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) re-categorized tanning bed radiation as Category I “carcinogenic to humans.” This placed tanning bed radiation in the same category, as tobacco, and tobacco smoking, mustard gas, and plutonium among other carcinogenic agents.¹ In addition, the Food and Drug Administration has ruled that tanning rays are carcinogenic agents and the World Health Organization has recommended that no one under the age of 18 use tanning beds and sunlamps.²

Despite the evidence about the hazards of indoor tanning, thirty million Americans visit tanning salons each year, and more than a million Americans use indoor salons every day.³ Indoor tanning has been associated with a 75 percent increase in the risk of melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer.⁴ More alarmingly, the use of indoor tanning beds is extremely common among teenage girls and young women. About 35 percent of 17 year-old girls, almost 36 percent of women and 12.2 percent of men ages 18 to 24 surveyed in a 2010 *Archives of Dermatology* study tanned indoors in the past year. Many experts believe this is why skin cancer is the most common form of cancer for young adults 25 to 29 years old and the second most common form of cancer for young people 15 to 29 years old.⁵

New research published in the *Archives of Dermatology* shows teenagers have alarming access to artificial UV radiation even in states with parental consent and accompaniment restrictions.⁶ This study adds to the mountain of evidence that indoor tanning should be restricted for those under 18 years of age. Regardless of the current parental consent and accompanying restrictions in some states, this study shows young people have alarming access to artificial UV radiation, more than double the FDA’s recommended limit for first-week frequency.

¹ IARC Working Group. Special Report: Policy; A review of human carcinogens –Part D: radiation. *Lancet Oncology* 2009; 10: 751-52.

² WHO guidance brochure : artificial tanning sunbeds / prepared by Craig Sinclair ISBN 92 4 159080 7
<http://www.who.int/uv/publications/en/sunbeds.pdf>

³ Kwon HT, Mayer JA, Walker KK, Yu H, Lewis EC, Belch GE. Promotion of frequent tanning sessions by indoor tanning facilities: two studies. *J Am Acad Dermatol* 2002;46:700-5.

⁴ The International Agency for Research on Cancer Working Group on artificial ultraviolet (UV) light and skin cancer "The association of use of sunbeds with cutaneous malignant melanoma and other skin cancers: A systematic review." *International Journal of Cancer*. 2007 March 1;120:111-1122

⁵ *Cancer Epidemiology in Older Adolescents & Young Adults*. SEER AYA Monograph Pages 53-57. 2007

⁶ *Archives of Dermatology: Youth Access to Artificial UV Radiation Exposure*
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The Solution:

The science is clear: tanning beds and lamps are hazardous to health and especially dangerous for those under 18 years of age. State laws requiring parental permission to allow minors to use tanning salons are ineffective. Nothing short of a ban on indoor tanning for minors will protect them from this cancer-causing behavior. Thirty states currently regulate the practice of indoor tanning by children under age 18, and 21 of those 30 states restrict youth access to indoor tanning facilities in some way. However, no state completely prohibits such use for all children under age 18. The AMA has long advocated for strict laws to prohibit minors' purchase and use of indoor tanning beds and sunlamps. In 2006, the AMA adopted model state legislation to address this problem. This model state legislation entitled, "Prohibiting the sale of tanning parlor ultraviolet rays to those under 18 years of age" provides an outstanding opportunity for state lawmakers to improve the public health and safety of minors. This model bill is a straightforward ban on the sale of ultraviolet rays i.e. tanning sessions to minors, unless a phototherapy session is prescribed and supervised by a physician.

Relevant AMA Policy

H-440.959 Tanning Parlors

It is the policy of the AMA to (1) continue to support an educational campaign on the hazards of tanning parlors, as well as the development of local tanning parlor ordinances to protect our patients and the general public from improper and dangerous exposure to ultraviolet radiation; and (2) support legislation to strengthen state laws to make the consumer as informed and safe as possible. (Res. 157, A-90; Reaffirmed: Sunset Report, I-00)

D-440.960 Prohibiting the Sale of Tanning Parlor Ultraviolet Rays to Those Under 18 Years of Age

Our AMA will: (1) develop model state legislation to prohibit the sale of tanning parlor ultraviolet rays to those under 18 years of age except as prescribed by a physician and will widely disseminate this model legislation to its component societies; and (2) request that the FDA Center for Devices and Radiological Health immediately hold fair hearings on the safety and efficacy of ultraviolet-A (UVA) bulbs as used in indoor tanning facilities and make their findings publicly available. A status report on this effort will be provided at the 2006 Interim Meeting. (Res. 428, A-06)

H-440.967 Public Information Program Addressing the Dangers of UVA Exposure

The AMA: (1) supports using its public education capabilities to warn the public of the risks of ultraviolet A radiation (UVA) exposure by skin tanning units; (2) endorses the findings released by the FDA warning Americans that the use of UVA tanning booths and sun beds pose potentially significant health risks to users and should be discouraged; (3) supports working with the FDA to ensure that state and local authorities implement legislation, rules, and regulations regarding UVA exposure, including posted warnings in commercial tanning salons and spas; (4) supports, in conjunction with various concerned national specialty societies, an educational campaign to secure appropriate state regulatory and oversight activities for tanning parlor facilities, to reduce improper and dangerous exposure to ultraviolet light by patients and general public consumers; (5) supports intensified efforts to enforce current regulations; and (6) encourages the development of sunscreens that will protect the skin from a broad spectrum of ultraviolet radiation, including both UVA and UVB. (Sub. Res. 103, A-88; Res. 418, I-94; Appended: Res. 407, I-99; Reaffirmed: Res. 440, A-05)