



Support HB 2896 - Protecting Minors from Skin Cancer

Skin cancers remain a highly preventable form of cancer that affects a disproportionately high number of Oregonians. Over the past three decades, more people have had skin cancer than all other cancers combined.ⁱ Melanoma is the most deadly type of skin cancer. Melanoma is responsible for 75% of all skin cancer deaths, and 1 in 8 people diagnosed with melanoma will die from it. The good news is we know that limiting exposure to ultraviolet light, especially in young people, is the best way to prevent skin cancer.

Oregon's Skin Cancer Rate is Unusually High

- Women in Oregon diagnosed with melanoma have the highest death rate in the country when compared to any other state, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
- Overall, Oregon has the 4th highest death rate for melanoma in the United States.
- Douglas County has the highest rate of new melanoma diagnoses in the state and ranks among the highest 2% of counties nationwide.
- Josephine County has the 5th highest melanoma death rate among counties nationwide, 107% higher than the national average.

The Dangers of Indoor Tanning

Using a tanning bed, booth, or sunlamp to get a tan is called "indoor tanning." Indoor tanning uses ultraviolet radiation, which is proven to cause cancer. In fact, the Food Drug Administration has classified UV tanning beds as a Level 1 known human carcinogen, in the same category as tobacco, arsenic, and mustard gas. Indoor tanning has been linked with skin cancers including melanoma, squamous cell carcinoma, and cancers of the eye (ocular melanoma).ⁱⁱ

Tanning salons use 10 – 15 times the amount of UVA rays when compared to the sun. These UVA rays speed up the tanning process, but also cause melanoma. In fact, just one indoor tanning session increases a person's chances of developing melanoma by 20%, and each additional session during the same year boosts the risk almost another 2%.ⁱⁱⁱ

Children More at Risk of Developing Skin Cancer

Melanoma rates in young people are skyrocketing. A 2012 study by the Mayo Clinic shows the number of melanomas found among women under 40 years old increased by more than eightfold between the 1970s and 2000s. Cases of melanoma among men under 40 also increased by more than fourfold during the same time period.

Using a tanning bed is particularly dangerous for young people; people who begin indoor tanning before age 35 have a 75% higher risk of developing melanoma in their lifetime.^{iv} While exposure to UV light is fairly consistent across age groups, research indicates that high-risk exposure happens more commonly in teens and that overexposure during childhood greatly increases the chances of developing skin cancer later in life.

According to a CDC report released in 2011, the following proportions of children report indoor tanning:^v

- 13% of all high school students
- 21% of high school girls
- 32% of girls in the 12th grade
- 32% of non-Hispanic white women aged 18–21 years reported indoor tanning. Those who reported indoor tanning device use reported an average of 28 sessions in the past year.^{vi}

A more recent 2012 Congressional report states an even more sobering statistic: 40% of Caucasian females between age 16-18 visit commercial tanning facilities.

Current regulations are NOT working

Unfortunately, minors in Oregon can easily access indoor tanning beds. According to current state rule, a child under 18 years of age must only obtain a one-time parental consent to utilize tanning beds and operators are not required to ask a patrons age.

While there are requirements that tanning operators to be trained to skin type clients, in 2012 more than 50% of salons inspected by Oregon Radiation Protection Services were cited for failure to properly skin type new tanners and failure to limit exposure to the manufactures' recommendations. The second most common violation cited was tanning operators being unable to provide proof that staff was properly trained.

Better Protecting Children from Skin Cancer in Oregon

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, at least 33 states regulate the use of tanning facilities by minors. Currently California and Vermont ban the use of tanning beds for all minors under 18, as well as some local jurisdictions like Chicago.

The evidence is clear that UV tanning beds cause skin cancer. This radiation exposure in children increases their likelihood of skin cancer by 75%.

Moreover, there is a safe alternative to UV tanning beds. Tanning salons offer an option called spray tanning. A spray tan allows an individual to appear tan without causing cancer—the chemical used in spray tanning has been approved by the Federal Drug Administration since 1973.

Proposed Legislation

House Bill 2896 would prohibit children under 18 from utilizing indoor UV tanning devices, unless proof of a physician exemption is provided.

For more information, please contact Suzy Funkhouser (503-701-6212) or Julie Hanna (503-860-2662) of Oregon Health & Science University Government Relations.

ⁱ Stern, RS. Prevalence of a history of skin cancer in 2007: results of an incidence-based model. *Arch Dermatology* 2010; 146(3):279-282.

ⁱⁱ Lazovich D, Vogel RI, Berwick M, Weinstock MA, Anderson KE, Warshaw EM. [Indoor tanning and risk of melanoma: a case-control study in a highly exposed population.](#) *Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers and Prevention* 2010;19(6):1557–1568.

ⁱⁱⁱ Boniol M, Autier P, Boyle P, Gandini S. Cutaneous melanoma attributable to sunbed use: systematic review and meta-analysis. *BMJ* 2012; 345:e4757. [DOI:10.1136/bmj.e4757.](#)

⁴ 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;120(5):1116–1122.

^v Eaton DK, Kann L, Kinchen S, Shanklin S, Flint KH, Hawkins J, Harris WA, Lowry R, McManus T, Chyen D, Whittle L, Lim C, Wechsler H. [Youth risk behavior surveillance—United States, 2011.](#) *MMWR Surveillance Summaries* 2012;61(4):1–162.

^{vi} Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). [Use of indoor tanning devices by adults—United States, 2010.](#) *MMWR* 2012;61(18):323–326.