



**Testimony Before the
Senate Health Care and Human Services Committee regarding HB 2896
Presented by Dr. William Pierce
on behalf of the Oregon Medical Association
March 19, 2013**

Chair Monnes Anderson, Vice-Chair Kruse, members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Dr. William C “Bud” Pierce, and I am the President of the Oregon Medical Association. I am a medical oncologist and I have practiced in Salem for the past 19 years.

I am pleased to testify today in support of HB 2896. HB 2896 prohibits the use of tanning devices for minors under the age of 18 unless an exemption is provided by their physician. As an oncologist, I have personally seen the effects of high doses of ultraviolet exposure, especially from the overuse of tanning beds. We know that skin cancer is one of the most prevalent types of cancer that disproportionately affects a high number of Oregonians. It is a preventable cancer: prevented by limiting exposure to ultraviolet light. Limiting exposure to the types UV lights found in tanning beds for minors greatly decreases their chance of developing deadly melanomas later in life; decreasing their radiation exposure can decrease their likelihood of developing cancer by as much as 75%.

Tanning beds have been increasingly used over the past 30 years, and the incidence of melanoma has increased fourfold in men and tenfold in women during that time. Twenty years ago it was rare for me to see young patients with melanoma cancer; I now see such patients with increasing frequency. A young teenage patient under my care recently completed one year of difficult biologic therapy, but still has a significant risk of dying of cancer in the next 5-15 years despite extensive surgery and therapy given by me. In 2009 The World Health Organization classified UVA, the light source used in tanning beds, as a carcinogen, and recommended measures to limit exposure. As an oncologist and a father of 2 who are now 24 and 26 years of age, I did not allow my children to use tanning beds during their childhood, and I am pleased to say that they have heeded my advice and do not use tanning beds as adults. I speak today as I believe that all Oregon’s children deserve the same protection that my children received from me.

HB 2896 is a step in the right direction to prevent skin cancer for many young Oregonians. The OMA would like to see this bill further strengthened by eliminating any exemption to tanning for minors under the age of 18 years. Requiring a physician signature as the exemption to tan for minors may lead to an increase in the number of patient requests for documentation signed by the physician. However, nothing in the bill prevents the physician from denying the patient’s request is not deemed medically necessary.

I would like to thank you once again for the opportunity to address the committee regarding this very important topic and I’m happy to answer any questions.