July 21, 2015

The Honorable Jason M. Lewis
Senate Chair, Joint Committee on Public Health
State House
Room 511B
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Chairman Lewis:

The American Osteopathic Association (AOA), the American Osteopathic College of Dermatology (AOCD) and the Massachusetts Osteopathic Society (MOS) are writing to encourage you to support SB 1229. This bill would prohibit the use of artificial tanning devices by minors under the age of 18. The AOA, AOCD and MOS strongly support restricting the use of tanning devices, which can have serious long-term health consequences including cancer, by minors.

The AOA proudly represents its professional family of more than 109,000 osteopathic physicians and osteopathic medical students, promotes public health, encourages scientific research, serves as the primary certifying body for DOs, is the accrediting agency for osteopathic medical schools, and has federal authority to accredit hospitals and other health care facilities. The AOCD represents over 600 physicians, dermatology residents and student members. It is dedicated to improving the standards of the practice of dermatology, stimulating the study of dermatology and promoting understanding of the nature and scope of services rendered by osteopathic dermatologists. MOS is a professional organization that represents over 900 DOs providing patient care in Massachusetts.

Tanning equipment works by bombarding the skin with ultraviolet (UV) radiation. Tanning salons use lamps that emit UV-A and UV-B radiation, both of which damage the skin and can cause skin cancer.1 In 2009, the International Agency for Research on Cancer, a working group of the World Health Organization (WHO), classified UV-emitting tanning devices as a carcinogen, an agent known to cause cancer in humans.2 In 2012, a study found that indoor tanning can cause the most common form of skin cancer, non-melanoma skin cancer, in addition to the deadliest form of skin cancer, malignant melanoma.3

---

Prohibiting minors from using tanning equipment is an effective means to protect them from the long-term health risks of these devices. Young people are at a heightened risk of developing skin cancer from indoor tanning, as they subject themselves to additional years of artificial UV exposure. For this reason, the WHO and the American Academy of Dermatology recommend banning the use of tanning devices by minors. States that have restricted access to indoor tanning for minors have seen stable or decreased rates of skin cancer, while states without these policies have seen an increase in the same.

The use of tanning equipment by children is inappropriate and should be prohibited due to its long-term health effects. We urge you to protect Massachusetts’ citizens from artificial UV exposure by supporting SB 1229. Should you need any additional information, please feel free to contact Nicholas Schilligo, MS, AOA Associate Vice President of State Government Affairs, at nschilligo@osteopathic.org or (800) 621-1773, ext. 8185.

Sincerely,

John W. Becher, DO
President, AOA

Rick Lin, DO, FAOCD
President, AOCD

William Foley, DO, MSc
President, MOS

CC: Boyd R. Buser, DO, AOA President-elect
Joseph A. Giaimo, DO, Chair, AOA Department of Governmental Affairs
Michael K. Murphy, DO, Chair, AOA Bureau of State Government Affairs
Adrienne White-Faines, MPA, AOA Chief Executive Officer
Catherine A. Galligan, RN, MM, CPA, AOA Chief Operating Officer
Ray Quintero, Vice President, AOA Public Policy
Nicholas Schilligo, MS, Associate Vice President, AOA State Government Affairs
Marsha A. Wise, BS, Executive Director, AOCD
Sally Podolski, Affiliate Executive, MOS

---

6 Dore, et al., supra.