



June 18, 2013:

Texas Becomes Fifth State to Enact New Tanning Bed Restrictions

The Melanoma Research Alliance (MRA) congratulates the state of Texas for enacting legislation to ban the use of indoor tanning beds for minors. This is a crucial step in protecting youth from a known health danger and will prevent many from receiving a diagnosis of skin cancer in the future. Indoor tanning devices, which have been labeled by international health authorities as class 1 carcinogens, pose a significant health threat, especially to young people. Indoor tanning is clearly associated with increased risk for all skin cancers including deadly melanoma. Tanning beds emit both UVA and UVB radiation, both of which damage skin cells, causing skin cancer and premature skin aging.

Texas becomes the fifth state in the nation, and the third state this year, to implement an under 18 ban. Since 2012, California, Vermont, Oregon, and Nevada have enacted similar tanning bed restrictions for minors. Under-18 bills are gaining momentum across the country, and a similar bill in Illinois is currently awaiting the governor's signature. This important milestone in Texas comes after years of hard work by multiple local and national stakeholders. One leader in the effort, who has testified multiple times before the State Legislature in support of this ban is Dr. Jeffrey Gershenwald of the M.D. Anderson Cancer Center. Dr. Gershenwald is a member of MRA's Medical Advisory Committee and a recognized leader in the field of melanoma research and treatment.

The MRA strongly supports efforts among state legislatures to reduce the use of these devices and raise awareness of the dangers of UV exposure; MRA urges states considering such restrictions to move forward on the proposed legislation.

Melanoma is the deadliest of skin cancers and the incidence is rising dramatically, notably among the young and in U.S. women age 25-29 years, frequent users of tanning beds. Studies by the World Health Organization established a 75% increased risk of melanoma in indoor tanning bed use. The recent bans on tanning are a welcome step in the battle to reverse the increasing incidence rate of skin cancer, especially melanoma.