



August 16, 2013:

MRA Commends Illinois on New Tanning Bed Restrictions for Minors

The Melanoma Research Alliance (MRA) congratulates the state of Illinois for enacting legislation to ban the use of indoor tanning beds for minors. Illinois becomes the sixth state in the nation, and the fourth state this year, to implement an under 18 ban. Since 2012, California, Vermont, Oregon, Nevada and Texas have enacted similar tanning bed restrictions for minors. With Illinois' most recent ban, over one quarter of the U.S. population now lives in a state where tanning beds are banned for minors. MRA is heartened by this progress and 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 MRA strongly supports efforts among state legislatures to reduce the use of these devices and raise awareness of the dangers of UV exposure.

Banning indoor tanning devices for minors 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 (the same rating as cigarettes), 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.

The recent bans on tanning are a welcome step in the battle to reverse the increasing incidence rate of skin cancer, especially melanoma.