

January 25, 2018

The Honorable Merv Riepe
Chair
Health and Human Services Committee
Nebraska Legislature
Room 1402
P.O. Box 94604
Lincoln, NE 68509

Re: American Medical Association support for LB 838

Dear Chair Riepe:

On behalf of the American Medical Association (AMA) and our physician and medical student members, I am writing to express our support of Legislative Bill (LB) 838, legislation that will prohibit the use of tanning devices by minors. The AMA has long advocated for strict laws to prohibit minors' purchase and use of indoor tanning beds and sunlamps. We applaud the Nebraska legislature for considering this important public health measure.

The hazardous effects of ultraviolet (UV) radiation are undisputed: skin cancer formation, premature aging of the skin, cataract formation, impairment of the immune system, photosensitizing reaction with various drugs and initiation and/or aggravation of certain systemic diseases. In fact, the toxic effects of excessive exposure to UV tanning bed radiation have been confirmed by the World Health Organization International Agency for Research on Cancer, which categorized tanning bed radiation as a Group 1 agent "carcinogenic to humans." This categorization places tanning bed radiation in the same category as tobacco and tobacco smoking, mustard gas and plutonium among other carcinogenic agents.¹ In addition, the Food and Drug Administration has ruled that tanning rays are carcinogenic agents and warns against use of tanning beds and sunlamps by individuals under the age of 18.²

Despite the evidence about the hazards of indoor tanning, nearly 10 million Americans visit tanning salons each year.³ More alarmingly, the use of indoor tanning beds is extremely common among teenage girls and the rates increase with each year of adolescence. According to the 2015 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System, seven percent of all high school students use indoor tanning devices, including 11 percent of high school girls, 16 percent of girls in the 12th grade and 15 percent of white high school

¹ IARC Working Group, *Special Report: Policy; A review of human carcinogens –Part D: radiation*, 10 *Lancet Oncology* 8, 751-2 (Aug. 2009).

² US Food and Drug Administration, *Indoor Tanning: The Risks of Ultraviolet Rays*, consumer update, <https://www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates/ucm186687.htm> (last visited Jan. 23, 2018).

³ Gary Guy, et al., *Recent Changes in the Prevalence of and Factors Associated With Frequency of Indoor Tanning Among US Adults*, 151 *JAMA Dermatology* 11, 1256-59 (Nov. 2015).

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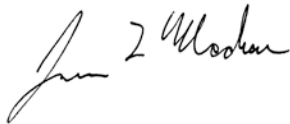
girls.⁴ Many experts believe this is why skin cancer is the most common form of cancer for young adults 25 to 29 years of age and the second most common form of cancer for young people 15 to 29 years of age.⁵ Exposure to tanning beds before age 30 increases a person's risk of developing melanoma by 75 percent.⁶

Even in states with parental consent and accompaniment restrictions, adolescents have alarming access to artificial UV radiation.⁷ Therefore, indoor tanning should be restricted for those under 18 years of age. Research has concluded that indoor tanning laws with age restrictions are effective in reducing indoor tanning among female high school students, for whom rates are the highest.⁸ Research has also demonstrated widespread compliance with age restrictions by tanning facilities in states that have enacted such laws.⁹

The science is clear: tanning beds and lamps are hazardous to health and especially dangerous for those under 18 years of age. State laws requiring parental permission to allow minors to use tanning salons are ineffective. Nothing short of a ban on indoor tanning for minors will protect them from this cancer-causing behavior.

We thank you for your consideration of our views on this issue. If you need further information, please contact Annalia Michelman, JD, Senior Legislative Attorney, Advocacy Resource Center, at annalia.michelman@ama-assn.org, or (312) 464-4788.

Sincerely,



James L. Madara, MD

cc: Nebraska Medical Association

⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, US Department of Health and Human Services, Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance – United States, 2015, 65 Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report 6, 44 (Jun. 2016).

⁵ Melanoma Research Foundation, Melanoma Fact Sheet, <https://www.melanoma.org/sites/default/files/u13882/2015FactSheetUpdated3-16-15.pdf> (last visited Jan. 23 2018).

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ Latrice Pichon, et al., *Youth Access to Artificial UV Radiation Exposure*, 145 Archives of Dermatology 9, 997-1002 (Sep. 2009).

⁸ Gery Guy, et al., *State indoor tanning laws and adolescent indoor tanning*, 104 Am J Public Health, 4, 69-74 (Feb. 2014).

⁹ Courtney Choy, et al., *Compliance with indoor tanning bans for minors among businesses in the USA*, 7 Translational Behavioral Medicine 4, 637-44 (Jun. 2017).