

July 8, 2011

The Honorable Olympia Snowe
U.S. Senate
154 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Snowe:

The undersigned organizations are writing to express opposition to S.1278, legislation to repeal the tax on indoor tanning services. While the undersigned have a variety of opinions on the health system reform law, we strongly believe in the advancement of public policies that promote prevention and education about skin cancer and reflect the dangers of indoor tanning.

Countless scientific studies have shown clear and compelling evidence that tanning bed use increases the risk of developing all forms of skin cancer, including melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer. The damage caused by ultraviolet (UV) radiation from tanning beds is cumulative and often irreversible, and the earlier people start to tan, the higher their risk of developing skin cancer in their lifetimes. There is a demonstrated 75 percent increase in the risk of developing melanoma with even minimal use of a tanning bed. The World Health Organization's International Agency for Research on Cancer classified tanning beds as group 1 - carcinogenic to humans, the highest cancer risk category.

Yet, there is a steady rise in the number of young women diagnosed with melanoma, and at more advanced stages. Melanoma is increasing faster in young women than in young men – and a major difference in behavior is that women are more likely to use indoor tanning beds. Nearly 70 percent of tanning salon patrons are Caucasian girls and women, primarily aged 16 to 29 years.

The risks inherent in tanning bed use cannot be ignored. Like the tobacco tax, the tanning tax appropriately reflects the carcinogenic effects of indoor tanning. As it currently stands, the indoor tanning tax serves as the only policy at the federal level that acts as a deterrent to the harmful behavior and significant health risks of indoor tanning.

As the number of diagnosed cases of skin cancer continues to increase – current estimates are that one in five Americans will develop skin cancer during his or her lifetime – prevention and early diagnosis of skin cancer remain important health messages for all health care organizations. It is imperative that we work together to ensure the health of our citizens.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Dermatology Association
American Academy of Family Physicians
American Academy of Neurology
American Academy of Ophthalmology
The American Academy of Otolaryngology—Head and Neck Surgery
American Academy of Pediatrics
American College of Mohs Surgery
American College of Physicians
American College of Preventive Medicine
American College of Radiology
American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer
American Geriatrics Society
American Medical Association
American Osteopathic Association
American Society of Anesthesiologists
American Society of Clinical Oncology
American Society for Dermatologic Surgery Association
American Society for Mohs Surgery
American Society of Plastic Surgeons
The American Society for Radiation Oncology
Dermatology Nurses' Association
Norris Cotton Cancer Center at Dartmouth
Melanoma Research Foundation
The Skin Cancer Foundation
The Society of Dermatology Physician Assistants

Alaska State Medical Association
California Medical Association
Colorado Medical Society
Connecticut State Medical Society
Medical Society of Delaware
Medical Society of the District of Columbia
Idaho Medical Association
Louisiana Medical Association
Maine Medical Association
MedChi, The Maryland State Medical Society
Massachusetts Medical Society

Michigan State Medical Society
Minnesota Medical Association
Mississippi State Medical Association
Missouri State Medical Association
Montana Medical Association
Nebraska Medical Association
Nevada State Medical Association
New Hampshire Medical Society
Medical Society of New Jersey
North Carolina Medical Society
North Dakota Medical Association
Ohio State Medical Association
Oregon Medical Association
Pennsylvania Medical Society
Rhode Island Medical Society
South Dakota State Medical Association
Tennessee Medical Association
Texas Medical Association
Vermont Medical Society
Medical Society of Virginia
Washington State Medical Association

Arizona Dermatology and Dermatologic Surgery Society
California Society of Dermatology & Dermatologic Surgery
Colorado Dermatology Society
Florida Society of Dermatology and Dermatologic Surgery
Florida Society of Dermatologic Surgeons
Illinois Dermatological Society
Indiana Association of Dermatology
Iowa Dermatological Society
Maryland Dermatologic Society
Massachusetts Academy of Dermatology
The Michigan Dermatological Society
Minnesota Dermatological Society
Mississippi Dermatological Society
Missouri Dermatological Society
Nebraska Dermatology Society
New Hampshire Society for Dermatology
New Jersey Dermatological Society
New York State Society of Dermatology and Dermatologic Surgery
North Carolina Dermatology Association
Ohio Dermatological Association
Oregon Dermatology Society
Pennsylvania Academy of Dermatology and Dermatologic Surgery
South Carolina Dermatological Association
Texas Dermatological Society

Utah Dermatology Society
Washington DC Dermatological Society
Washington State Dermatology Association
Wisconsin Dermatological Society

Cc: United States Senate