

June XX, 2011

The Honorable Michael Grimm
U.S. House of Representatives
512 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Grimm,

The undersigned organizations are writing to express opposition to H.R. 2092, 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 Ophthalmology
American Academy of Pediatrics
American College of Physicians
American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer
American Medical Association
American Osteopathic Association
American Society for Dermatologic Surgery Association
The American Society for Radiation Oncology
Melanoma Research Foundation

Arizona Dermatology and Dermatologic Surgery Society
Colorado Dermatology Society