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American Academy of Dermatology Commends Reclassification of Tanning Beds as Carcinogenic

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SCHAUMBURG, ILL (Jul 30, 2009) — The American Academy of Dermatology (Academy) commends the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) for its re-categorization of indoor tanning devices as carcinogenic to humans. This classification places indoor tanning in the highest cancer risk category afforded by this international agency, which is a division of the World Health Organization (WHO).

"The American Academy of Dermatology applauds the IARC and the World Health Organization for confirming what the Academy has known for many years – that ultraviolet light is the primary cause of skin cancer and avoiding excessive exposure to the sun and other forms of ultraviolet radiation, such as indoor tanning, is the solution," said dermatologist David M. Pariser, MD, FAAD, president of the American Academy of Dermatology.

The review concluded that the risk of melanoma, the most deadly form of skin cancer, increases by 75 percent when use of tanning beds and sunlamps begins before 30 years of age. This high-risk tanning behavior, seen primarily in females, could explain the increasing melanoma rates for females 15-29 years old. Since 1992, melanoma has increased 3.1 percent annually in male and female Caucasians, but in recent years it is increasing more rapidly in young Caucasian women (3.8 percent since 1995).

"Indoor tanning is particularly troubling because it is unnecessary and is practiced mainly for cosmetic reasons. Individuals, particularly young people, who utilize tanning beds are intentionally putting their health at risk," stated Dr. Pariser. "We hope that this new classification will persuade individuals to stop using or avoid indoor tanning all together."

This year, more than 1 million new cases of skin cancer will be diagnosed in the United States — exceeding the incidence of all other cancers combined. It is estimated that there will be about 121,840 new cases of melanoma in 2009. Melanoma is the most common form of cancer for young adults 25-29 years old and the second most common form of cancer for adolescents and young adults 15-29 years old.

Previously, the Academy supported the WHO's 2005 recommendation that no person under the age of 18 should use a tanning bed. Nearly 30 million people tan indoors in the United States annually and of these, 2.3 million are teens.

The Academy recently lauded the state of Texas for being the first in the nation to prohibit the use of indoor tanning devices for all children and adolescents under the age of 16.5 – the most restrictive law in the country.

The American Academy of Dermatology Association (AADA) position statement on indoor tanning opposes indoor tanning and supports a ban on the production and sale of indoor tanning equipment for non-medical purposes. Additionally, the AADA urges the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to take action that will ban the sale and use of tanning equipment for non-medical purposes. Unless and until the FDA bans the sale and use of tanning equipment for non-medical purposes, the AADA supports the following requirements for indoor tanning facilities:

- No minor should be permitted to use tanning devices.
- A Surgeon General's warning should be placed on all tanning devices.
- No person or facility should advertise the use of any ultraviolet A or ultraviolet B tanning device using wording such as "safe," "safe tanning," "no harmful rays," "no adverse effect," or similar wording or concepts.

The American Academy of Dermatology (Academy), founded in 1938, is the largest, most influential, and most representative of all dermatologic associations. A sister organization to the Academy, the American Academy of Dermatology Association is the resource for government affairs, health policy and practice information for dermatologists, and plays a major role in formulating socioeconomic policies that can enhance the quality of dermatologic care. With a membership of more than 16,000 physicians worldwide, the Academy is committed to: advancing the diagnosis and medical, surgical, and cosmetic treatment of the skin, hair and nails; advocating high standards in clinical practice, education, and research in dermatology; and supporting and enhancing patient care for a lifetime of healthier skin. For more information, contact the Academy at 1-888-462-DERM (3376) or www.aad.org.



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