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July 31, 2007

The Honorable Tom Brinkman, Jr.
Chairman and Members
House Commerce and Labor Committee
77 S. High Street
11th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215-6111

RE: House Bill 230

Dear Chairman Brinkman and Members:

I rise to support the legislation pending before your committee that deals with the promotion of child health and safety by reducing the availability of ultraviolet radiation artificial sources for non-medical activities (tanning of the skin artificially with ultraviolet light A). As you know, House Bill 230 would limit access to non-medical use of ultraviolet light A and B by individuals under the age of eighteen (18). I strongly support this limitation of access to what are clearly carcinogenic wave lengths. The FDA has ruled that ultraviolet radiation is carcinogenic whether the radiation comes from tanning parlors or the sun. However, tanning parlor radiation penetrates deeper and does more harm than natural sunlight. The National Institute of Health states that it may take only 20 minutes of hazardous tanning parlor ultraviolet radiation to do the harm of 5 hours of natural sunlight. The use of these same rays for cosmetic purposes in pre-teens and teens seems unconscionable.

As you are aware from other correspondence, the Ohio Dermatologic Association, the Ohio State Medical Association and the American Medical Association have unanimously supported the concept of limiting facilities that deliver ultraviolet light A and B to people under the age of 18. It is the hope of the physicians and support staff of these organizations that limiting this exposure will help control the terrible epidemic of skin cancer that has been accelerating in our country over the last several decades. Melanoma now affects 1 in 50 adults. Skin cancer is one of the most common forms of cancer, being slightly more than 50% of all malignancies reported in the United States annually. While these tumors may have other etiologies in rare cases, studies have demonstrated clearly that basal cells, squamous cells and melanomas have as their principle inciting agent ultraviolet radiation. Unfortunately, the radiation exposure early in life appears to be the most prominent factor in the development of malignancies in the 20's, 30's, and later life.

It is my hope that you and your committee will support the medical communities' initiative to try to control the unnecessary exposure of our youth to non-medical ultraviolet radiation. What we do in Ohio will serve as a model for nationwide implementation of more stringent ultraviolet radiation control. Our largest medical organization, the American Medical Association has gone on record favoring this limitation and has unanimously passed resolutions which carry with it the mandate for implementation.

Thank you for your time. We hope that you can support House Bill 230 which is a very worthy cause on behalf of the children and teenagers of Ohio.

Sincerely,

Charles L. Heaton, M.D.
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