NEW SURVEY FINDS TANNING SALONS ARE NOT WARNING TEENS AND YOUNG WOMEN ABOUT THE DANGERS OF TANNING BEDS
AADA Supports Tanning Bed Cancer Control Act and Asks FDA to Re-Classify Tanning Beds

WASHINGTON, D.C. (May 3, 2011) – Results of a new survey by the American Academy of Dermatology (Academy) found that a troubling number of Caucasian teen girls and young women are not being warned about the skin cancer dangers of indoor tanning beds by tanning salon employees. The American Academy of Dermatology Association (AADA) supports the Tanning Bed Cancer Control Act (TBCCA), which calls on the FDA to examine the classification of indoor tanning beds and implement enhanced labeling requirements.

“Indoor tanning poses a significant health risk, especially for Caucasians because of their fair skin. Studies have found that UV radiation from indoor tanning beds increases a person’s risk of developing melanoma by 75 percent,” said dermatologist Ronald L. Moy, MD, FAAD, president of the Academy.

“Contributing to this problem is the fact that tanning bed facilities currently are not required to verbally warn patrons of the known health risks of ultraviolet (UV) radiation and, in some cases, they may be misleading the public by falsely promoting artificial UV light as safer than natural sunlight.”

The Academy’s survey found that 43 percent of indoor tanners reported that they have never been warned about the dangers of tanning beds by tanning salon employees. When asked if they were aware of any warning labels on tanning beds, 30 percent of indoor tanners said no. By age group, younger tanning bed users (age 14-17) were more likely to be unaware of any warning labels on tanning beds than older tanners (age 18-22) – 42 percent vs. 25 percent, respectively.
Despite the fact that the United States Department of Health and Human Services and the World Health Organization’s International Agency for Research on Cancer have classified UV radiation from tanning devices as cancerous and in the same category as cigarettes, a number of younger tanning bed users still think tanning beds are safer than the sun. Specifically, younger tanning bed users age 14-17 are more than twice as likely to think tanning beds are safer than the sun than older tanners age 18-22 (39 percent vs. 15 percent, respectively) and more than three times as likely to think that tanning beds do not cause skin cancer (26 percent vs. 8 percent, respectively).

“The FDA currently ranks tanning beds as a Class I medical device, which provides a minimal level of regulation and oversight similar to bandages, tongue depressors, gauze and crutches,” said Dr. Moy. “That is why it’s important that the FDA change the classification of indoor tanning devices to reflect the significant health risks that they pose, often unknowingly, to tanning salon patrons.”

The Tanning Bed Cancer Control Act (TBCCA) was introduced yesterday by Representatives Carolyn Maloney (D-N.Y.) and Charlie Dent (R-Pa.). The scientific evidence related to the skin cancer risk posed by indoor tanning, findings of the Academy’s survey and the need for stricter controls of indoor tanning will be discussed at a congressional briefing today.

“The indoor tanning industry needs to take responsibility for educating its patrons so they can make informed decisions,” said Dr. Moy. “However, as we do with alcohol and tobacco laws, we need to protect our nation’s young people because research shows they are not heeding health warnings.”

At current rates, one in five Americans will develop skin cancer in his or her lifetime. Approximately 75 percent of skin cancer deaths are from melanoma, and the incidence of melanoma has been rising for at least 30 years – particularly among young, white women in most recent years.

May is Melanoma/Skin Cancer Detection and Prevention Month®. Visit www.melanomamondays.org to find out how to perform a skin self-exam, download a body mole map or find free skin cancer screenings in your area.
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 policies that can enhance the quality of dermatologic care. With a membership of more than 17,000 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 (888) 462-DERM (3376) or www.aad.org.

About the “2011 Indoor Tanning: Teen and Young Adult Women” Survey

More than 3,800 white, non-Hispanic females ages 14 to 22 responded to a nationwide survey online to determine their tanning knowledge, attitudes and behavior. The survey was conducted by Relevant Research, Inc. (formerly RH Research) of Chicago from December 28, 2010, to January 11, 2011. Data were weighted by age and region based on the US Census Current Population Survey (released in 2010).

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