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May 5, 2011

The Honourable Deborah Matthews
Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
10th Floor, Hepburn Block
80 Grosvenor Street
Toronto, Ontario M7A 2C4

Dear Minister:

We urge you to support Bill 31, an Act to help prevent skin cancer. Restricting youth access to indoor tanning facilities is a small measure we can implement to help curb the increasing rate of skin cancer in Ontario.

Skin cancers are largely preventable, with experts estimating more than 90% of melanomas are caused by severe ultraviolet radiation and sunburn. In young women aged 15-29, melanoma is the third most common cancer diagnosed.

We would be remiss to allow youth under 19 access to indoor tanning equipment, when we now know it can cause cutaneous melanoma and ocular melanoma. Furthermore, research has found that the risk of melanoma increases by an incredible 75% when use of such devices starts before the age of thirty.

Bill 31 proposes that the marketing and selling of indoor tanning services be prohibited to youth under the age of 19, and also recommends:

- the Government establish and maintain a registry of tanning equipment used for commercial purposes;
- owners of tanning facilities provide mandatory training for all staff; and
- signage is posted that warns of the health effects of using such equipment.

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Like many public health units, the Canadian Dermatology Association, the Ontario Medical Association, Cancer Care Ontario, and the Canadian Cancer Society (Ontario Division), we are voicing our support for Bill 31 and hope that you will do the same in Parliament.

Sincerely,



Amanda Rayburn
Chair, Board of Health, WDG Public Health

AR/wp

cc Ted Arnott, MPP, Wellington-Halton Hills
Sylvia Jones, MPP, Dufferin-Caledon
Liz Sandals, MPP, Guelph
Hon. John Wilkinson, MPP, Perth-Wellington
Michael Chong, MP, Wellington-Halton Hills
Gary Schellenberger, MP, Perth-Wellington
David Tilson, MP, Dufferin-Caledon
Frank Valeriote, MP, Guelph
Ontario Public Health Units, Boards of Health