



GRASSROOTS REPORT

State societies promote skin cancer awareness May declared prevention month in several states

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THIS SPRING, DERMATOLOGISTS throughout the U.S. raised awareness of skin cancer while building relationships with key lawmakers. These activities illustrate how many state societies are implementing a multi-faceted ap-

proach to advocacy by combining service activities, education, and lobbying efforts. Melanoma/Skin Cancer Prevention and Detection Month provided state

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dermatology societies with an opportunity to engage legislators on a number of different projects related to skin cancer and melanoma awareness and prevention. The relationships developed with lawmakers through these efforts are tremendously important as legislators create policy that affects the practice of medicine.

California

This year, the California Society of Dermatology and Dermatologic Surgery (CalDerm) held a skin cancer screening at the state capitol on Melanoma Monday in May. CalDerm volunteers part-

nered with dermatology nurses to screen state legislators and their staff and were able to screen more than 200 people. The annual screening event is not only a way for the dermatologists to screen for skin cancer and melanoma, it also provides dermatologists with an opportunity to educate policymakers about the dangers of these cancers.

In conjunction with this year's screening, CalDerm worked with state Sen. Elaine Alquist (D-Santa Clara) on a resolution declaring May 2010 as Skin Cancer Awareness Month in California. This layered approach to working with state legislators strength-

ens the voice of the specialty of dermatology within the state and among state policymakers.

Pennsylvania

The Pennsylvania Academy of Dermatology and Dermatologic Surgery worked with Sen. Patrick Browne, who sponsored a melanoma and skin cancer detection and prevention month resolution as well as indoor tanning legislation. The resolution was introduced and adopted on May 5. On the same day that the resolution was introduced, academy volunteers held a skin cancer screening at the state capitol and awarded two Legislator of the Year awards

— one to Rep. Jennifer Mann and one to Sen. Edwin Erickson for their work on bills to require a provider identification badge that would include information about each health care provider's level of training.

The dermatologists also used their time at the capitol to meet with state legislators to discuss indoor tanning legislation. The Pennsylvania Academy of Dermatology began its work to pass indoor tanning regulations several years ago. Senate Bill 460 was originally introduced in March 2009. After passing the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee in June 2009, it was sent to

the Senate Appropriations Committee where it remained for the last year. After much work by PAD and the bill sponsor, Sen. Browne, the Senate Appropriations Committee held a meeting on SB 460 on June 7 and the bill has now moved to the Senate floor for a vote.

SB 460 would fully regulate the indoor tanning industry in Pennsylvania by requiring tanning facility registration, warning signs, written warning statements from all customers, and record keeping among other provisions. In addition, the legislation prohibits use of a tanning device by minors under the age of 14, and requires in-person parental consent prior to a minor's (age 14 to 18) first use of a tanning device and every six months following the minor's first use.

Massachusetts

The Massachusetts Academy of Dermatology also worked with policymakers on an awareness declaration and, for the second year in a row, was able to obtain a gubernatorial proclamation regarding skin cancer prevention. The proclamation designated May 2010 as Melanoma/Skin Cancer Awareness Month. The proclamation underscored the society's work on indoor tanning legislation.

For several years, the Massachusetts Academy of Dermatology has been advocating for stronger indoor tanning regulations in the state for several years. This year, in honor of Glenna Kohl, who was diagnosed at age 22 with stage III melanoma and passed away in 2008 after battling melanoma for four years, the academy has succeeded in moving Senate Bill 2339 forward.

If enacted, S. 2339 will prohibit minors under the age of 16 from using a tanning device, and require those 16 to 17 to have prior written consent from a parent or legal guardian which is signed in the presence of the tanning facility operator.

S. 2339 was passed by the Massachusetts Senate on April 29 and quickly moved through the House Committee on Steering, Policy and Scheduling in May. On June 2 the bill was ordered to a third reading in the House. If S. 2339 passes the House and is sent to the Governor for his approval, Massachusetts will join other states, such as Wisconsin, with some of the most restrictive indoor tanning laws in the country.

If you are interested in working with state legislators to advocate on behalf of key issues affecting the specialty, or about state legislation, please contact Joanna Crooks at jcrooks@aad.org or Kathryn Chandra at kchandra@aad.org or visit www.aad.org/gov/state/PendingStateLegislation.html.

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