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## **Testimony of Martin Cohn, Associate Director Joint Committee on Public Health — Tuesday, May 10, 2011**

I am here today on behalf of the Massachusetts Academy of Dermatology, in support of S. 1175, an act to further regulate sun tanning salons that is currently before the Joint Committee on Public Health.

The Massachusetts Academy of Dermatology is a professional association of close to 300 Massachusetts practicing dermatologists.

This is my fourth time before this committee to urge passage of a bill that would better protect our children, which are our most important assets, promote children's health and safety, and reduce their future health costs.

Since the last hearing in 2009, more scientific evidence has been generated about the dangers posed by indoor tanning.

Last month, the American Academy of Pediatrics joined with the World Health Organization, the American Medical Association, and the American Academy of Dermatology in supporting legislation to ban the use of artificial tanning devices by people younger than 18 years.

In a review, the International Agency for Research on Cancer concluded that young adults should be discouraged from using indoor tanning equipment and that restricted access to tanning beds and sunlamps by minors should be strongly considered.

Last year, the Federal Trade Commission charged that the Indoor Tanning Association exaggerated the benefits of indoor tanning, and falsely denied that indoor tanning increases the risk of squamous cell and melanoma skin cancers.

This week, the Tanning Bed Cancer Control Act was re-introduced in Congress, which will address tanning bed safety by expanding the US Food and Drug Administration's regulation over tanning beds—ultimately limiting the strength of the UV rays emitted from the tanning bed's sunlamp and the amount of time a consumer may be exposed. This legislation will ensure that standards are updated to minimize risk, and that labels are positioned and worded to send a clear and prominent message about the real dangers associated with tanning.

And, right around the time of the last hearing, the International Agency for Research on Cancer, a working group of the World Health Organization, added ultraviolet (UV) radiation-emitting tanning devices to the list of the most dangerous forms of cancer-causing radiation. It joins an assembly of hazardous substances including plutonium and certain types of radium, as well as radiation from the sun.

The report cited research showing that tanning is especially hazardous to young people; those who use sunbeds before age 30 increase their lifetime risk of melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer, by 75 percent. The authors also pointed to studies showing a link between UV radiation from indoor tanning devices and melanomas of the skin and eyes. Melanoma will kill an estimated 8,650 people in the US this year alone.

In the past, opponents of this legislation have cited business concerns as a reason to stop this bill. This legislation would not prevent teenagers from using spray tanning devices utilized by indoor tanning establishments.

Because of the increased knowledge and the awareness of the hazards of tanning parlor ultraviolet light exposure to children the Massachusetts Academy of Dermatology supports the enactment of state legislation to protect all minors from the hazards of tanning parlor rays by prohibiting the sale of tanning parlor ultraviolet rays to those 16 years of age or younger.

The Massachusetts Academy of Dermatology opposes another bill before the committee, H2372, which lower the age to fourteen.

Thank you for your consideration of the passage of S.1175.