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**Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 922 An Act Allowing Students to Apply
Sunscreen Prior To Engaging In Outdoor Activities
Public Health Committee
March 4, 2019**

Senator Abrams, Representative Steinberg, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to comment today on Senate Bill 922.

My name is Gary Price, MD, MBA, FACS, and I have been practicing Plastic Surgery in Connecticut for 34 years. Skin cancer is a daily part of my practice, and I am the former president of the Connecticut Society of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeons, the New England Society of Plastic Surgeons, and the Connecticut State Medical Society.

Representing the Connecticut State Medical Society, I would speak in favor of this bill. Skin cancer in general, and malignant melanoma in particular, has become increasingly important public health issues, as you have heard in the preceding testimony. They are largely preventable through minimizing harmful exposure to sunlight and artificial sources of UV radiation.

Studies have shown that many individuals receive between 40 and 80% of their lifetime sun exposure by the time they reach the age of eighteen. This underscores the importance of interventions to minimize exposure, and prevent sunburns in our children. According to the Surgeon General's report, (page 29, appendix B of Dr. Ariyan's testimony) 44% of school systems in our country already allow for the application of sunscreen as a strategy for reducing sun exposure during school activities. Australia, through its long standing, nationally implemented "Sun Smart" program includes sunscreen application as well as many other strategies to reduce sun exposure to students (attachment "A").

The Surgeon General's report outlines a broad set of public health initiatives to not just focus attention on personal prevention, but also calls on state and local governments to foster policies which promote the provision of shade structures in our educational, recreational and public spaces. Considerations regarding these concerns have been, in general sadly lacking, and may also conflict with policies developed long before sun exposure was a public health problem. I believe that your committee could play an important role in addressing these issues, and in beginning a dialog at the state level regarding this important matter of public health.

In concluding, I would like to thank the committee for entertaining testimony regarding strategies for limiting sun exposure and reducing lifetime risk of skin cancer in our children, and affirm our support for SB 922.

Attachment A

SunSmart program

SunSmart's mission is to reduce skin cancer incidence, morbidity and mortality through a targeted prevention and early detection program.

Jointly funded by [Cancer Council Victoria](#) and the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation ([VicHealth](#)) since 1988, the SunSmart program leads the world in skin cancer prevention.

Today SunSmart is a multi-faceted program recognised for providing leadership and innovation in ultraviolet radiation (UV) protection. Programs operate in each state and territory of Australia by respective Cancer Councils, all using common principals but tailored to jurisdictional priorities. The sun protection message has expanded to Slip! Slop! Slap! Seek! Slide!

Internationally, Cancer Council Victoria has been designated a [World Health Organization](#) (WHO) Collaborative Centre for Ultraviolet Radiation since 2004. Supporting SunSmart at Cancer Council Victoria is the Prevention Division, the Centre for Behavioural Research in Cancer, the Cancer Epidemiology Centre and the Cancer Information and Support Service.

The SunSmart objectives for 2016–19 are to:

1. Improve skin cancer prevention awareness, knowledge, attitudes and behaviour in priority populations
2. Support priority populations to detect skin cancers earlier
3. Advocate for measures that aim to reduce the health and economic burdens of skin cancer.

History

[Cancer Council Victoria](#) and the [Victorian Health Promotion Foundation](#) first funded SunSmart in 1988 in Victoria.

30 years of commitment and partnerships with VicHealth, government, key partners and community agencies has seen huge changes in social norms and health including: A proven track record in preventing cancer and saving lives – it is estimated to have prevented more than 43,000 skin cancers and 1,400 deaths from the disease in Victoria between 1988 and 2011.



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While melanoma incidence in Victoria continues to rise, there are now falling incidence rates in men and women younger than 40 years, consistent with a positive effect of the SunSmart program on behaviour change.

In contrast to the pre-SunSmart 'baby boomers', the number of basal and squamous cell carcinoma skin cancer treatments among those aged under 45 years is also decreasing relative to population growth.

SunSmart is extremely cost effective with a \$2.20 return for every dollar spent in the Victorian program. Victoria was one of the first states in Australia to legislate solariums. In 2008 and more recently, ban commercial [solariums](#) entirely.

To find out more, go to Cancer Council Victoria's web page on [evaluation and behavioural research](#) in skin cancer.