



5 Reasons 'Tan Ban' Legislation Would Be A Mistake

While the professional tanning community supports constructive and cooperative measures to increase UV awareness and sunburn prevention, a matter our market takes very seriously, passage of legislation denying teenagers with their parents consent access to indoor tanning facilities would actually hurt more people than it helps and will lead to an increase in sunburn and skin injury. Proponents of such a measure, however well-intentioned, ignore conflicting research and confounding information and are doing the wrong thing for the right reasons. Specifically:

1. This is not a public health issue. It's a competitive issue. Dermatology has lost \$5 billion in phototherapy business, as clients are opting for more-affordable self-treatment of cosmetic skin diseases in tanning salons. Dermatology uses identical sunbeds in their offices to treat cosmetic skin diseases. "Phototherapy" (at up to \$100 a session, billed to insurance companies) involves intentionally sun-burning a patient. If this were a health-care issue, dermatology would suspend their own use of sunbeds for cosmetic purposes. But they haven't. In fact, they've lobbied to preserve it.

2. The science does not support it. Professional tanning salons are not the problem. Ban proponents have misrepresented the World Health Organization's data on this topic, which actually points to medical use of sunbeds for the treatment of cosmetic skin diseases and unmonitored home tanning units, but not professional tanning salonsⁱ:

WHO REPORT BY CATEGORY

Dermatology psoriasis sunbeds:

Professional tanning salon sunbed usage

RISK FACTOR

96% increase

6% increase

3. Parents do not support it. Two-thirds (67.1 percent) of American parents with teenagers support the tanning industry's current parental consent standard, according to a study of more than 1,000 adults with teenagers conducted by International Communications Research. Only 27.3 percent were in favor of new restrictions on teenage access to tanning facilities.

4. A ban will cost businesses and taxpayers money to implement. Enforcement of this provision will cost taxpayers money to implement, will hurt more than 1,000 Michigan small businesses and ultimately will not affect consumer behavior. Bill proponents are overstating the risks of regular non-burning UV exposure and consumers know it -- they will seek other options.

5. A ban will accomplish the opposite of what sponsors intend. Independent surveys have established that teens will simply tan more aggressively outdoors or will turn to unregulated home tanning units in friends' basements if they are not permitted to tan in salons with their parents consent. That simply drives the issue underground into sunbeds that do not have the exposure controls that are present in professional tanning facilities. Sunburn will increase, not decrease.

CONCLUSION: The present system works. Requiring signed consent from a parent/guardian is working. It's what most parents want. The tanning market supports constructive efforts to bolster this standard.

ⁱ Papas MA, Chappelle AH. Differential Risk of Malignant Melanoma By Sunbed Exposure Type. Proceedings of 3rd North American Congress of Epidemiology. Am J of Epid. 2011; 1003