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Indoor Tan-Free Skin Smart Campus Initiative Aims to Reduce College Students' Skin Cancer Risk

National Council on Skin Cancer Prevention recognizes universities for commitment to student health

WASHINGTON (Aug. 31, 2016) — Indoor tanning before age 35 increases one's risk of melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer, by 59 percent, and that risk increases with each use. Despite the danger, however, nearly 60 percent of college students have used an indoor tanning bed — and some of them never had to leave campus to do so.

According to a 2014 [study](#), 48 percent of universities have indoor tanning facilities either on campus or in off-campus housing, while 14.4 percent allow students to pay for indoor tanning using campus cash cards. "Melanoma is one of the most common cancers in young women, and that may be partially attributable to indoor tanning behaviors," says Sherry L. Pagoto, PhD, lead author of the study and co-chair of the Indoor Tan-Free Skin Smart Campus Initiative. "By making tanning devices so easily accessible, colleges are putting their students at risk for potentially deadly melanoma and other skin cancers."

In response to [The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent Skin Cancer](#), the National Council on Skin Cancer Prevention has launched the [Indoor Tan-Free Skin Smart Campus Initiative](#), which aims to promote skin cancer prevention and education on college campuses. "One of the goals of the Call to Action is to reduce harms from indoor tanning, and we believe the Indoor Tan-Free Skin Smart Campus Initiative is a big step in that direction," says NCSCP Co-Chair Sophie J. Balk, MD. "By educating college students about skin cancer risk and eliminating indoor tanning on college campuses, we hope to reduce melanoma incidence down the road."

Colleges that demonstrate their commitment to student health by promoting skin cancer prevention and education will be recognized with the Indoor Tan-Free Skin Smart Campus Award. To qualify for the award, colleges must prohibit indoor tanning facilities on campus and in university-promoted off-campus housing, as well as the use of campus cash cards to pay for indoor tanning services. Colleges also must adopt a formal indoor tan-free campus policy and offer a skin cancer education program in order to receive the award.

In conjunction with the launch of the initiative, East Tennessee State University in Johnson City, Tenn., was honored as the inaugural Indoor Tan-Free Skin Smart Campus Award recipient. "We hope ETSU and future honorees serve as role models for colleges and universities across the nation," says board-certified dermatologist Robert Dellavalle, MD, PhD, co-chair of the Indoor Tan-Free Skin Smart Campus Initiative.

Award nominations may be submitted via the initiative's website, which also includes resources for college students and administrators who are interested making their school a Skin Smart Campus. For more information, visit SkinSmartCampus.org.

About the National Council on Skin Cancer Prevention

The National Council on Skin Cancer Prevention is the united voice of more than 45 organizations, associations and agencies dedicated to preventing skin cancer through education, advocacy and raising awareness. National Council members represent the nation's premiere physicians, researchers, clinicians and advocates for melanoma and skin cancer prevention. For more information, visit SkinCancerPrevention.org.