

Communications Office

Peterborough County-City Health Unit
10 Hospital Drive
Peterborough, ON K9J 8M1
(705) 743-1000, ext. 391
www.pcchu.ca



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Holy Cross Students Call on Ontario Government to Ban Tanning Beds

MPP Jeff Leal Presented With Hundreds of Postcards Advocating “No Tan is Worth Dying For”

Friday, May 7, 2010, Peterborough



Today more than 50 Holy Cross Secondary School students presented MPP Jeff Leal with hundreds of postcards advocating for the Ontario Government to pass legislation banning the use of tanning beds for youth 18 years and under.

“Tanning beds emit ultraviolet radiation, a known carcinogen that can cause melanoma, the second leading cause of cancer in Ontario youth aged 15 to 34,” said Cathy Therrien, a public

health nurse with the Peterborough County-City Health Unit who supported the students’ advocacy campaign. “It’s wonderful to see so many students take this cause to heart because peer to peer messaging is one of the most effective ways to de-normalize risky behaviours like tanning.”

The Health Unit developed postcards, displays and Facebook ads as part of a province-wide health promotion campaign entitled “No Tan is Worth Dying For” to raise awareness about the numerous health risks of tanning beds and the need to protect youth from ultraviolet radiation exposure. With these materials, Ms. Therrien worked with Holy Cross Secondary School teacher Kelly Adams to integrate several advocacy activities into her Grade 10 civics class. Students encouraged their friends and families to sign as many postcards as possible to present to MPP Jeff Leal to take to the Honourable Margaret Best, Minister of Health Promotion, for her action.

What’s wrong with tanning beds?

- Ultraviolet radiation (UVR), such as that emitted from artificial tanning equipment, is a known human carcinogen.
- Tanning can cause melanoma, the second leading cause of cancer in Ontario youth aged 15 to 34 yrs.
- Exposure to UVR before the age of 18 is especially damaging and can increase

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- a person's risk of developing skin cancer both early and later in life.
- Some tanning beds expose you to five times the amount of radiation as the sun.
- Overexposure to tanning beds can lead to :
 - Non-melanoma and melanoma skin cancer
 - Eye conditions such as photokeratitis, photo conjunctivitis and even cataracts
 - Premature aging, wrinkles, dry leathery skin
 - Weakened immune system to fight off infections

Who is at risk?

- Even one tanning session can significantly increase your chance of developing skin cancer, especially if exposure happens before the age of 30. Young adults aged 15 to 34 are most vulnerable to melanoma.
- People with fair skin, light eyes, blond or red hair, freckles, lots of moles and/or history of sunburns should not tan because they are at the highest risk of developing skin cancer

What's being done?

- In 2009 the World Health Organization (WHO) placed tanning beds into the same group of known human carcinogens such as tobacco, arsenic and mustard gas.
- WHO introduced new recommendations to have tanning bed use banned for individuals under the age of 18, proper regulation of tanning facilities, and accurate identification of risks visible to customers.

For more information and videos about the risks of tanning beds, or to sign the Health Unit's online petition, please visit www.pcchu.ca/notan .

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For further information, please contact:

Brittany Cadence
Communications Officer
(705) 743-1000, ext. 391