



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **NH CCC Seeks Local High Schools, Colleges for Tanning Safety Contest Called “Your Skin Is In”**

**CONCORD** - New Hampshire high schools and colleges are being invited to join a tanning awareness contest called “Your Skin Is In,” sponsored by the Melanoma Foundation of New England (MFNE) and the New Hampshire Comprehensive Cancer Collaboration (NH CCC).

High school students are asked to take a no-tanning pledge prior to their prom, while college students take a similar pledge before spring break. Although college enrollments have already begun – the University of New Hampshire will be a participant – high school enrollments begin Feb. 1.

“This contest represents a great opportunity for class officers, student leaders, prom coordinators and community service groups like the National Honor Society,” said Nancy Kane, who serves as chairman of the board for the NH CCC. “It’s a chance to generate some school spirit and also increase awareness regarding an important health issue – the dangers from tanning and tanning beds – and the fact that melanoma is the second most common form of cancer for teens and young adults.”

Among the New Hampshire high schools expected to take part in the competition are Concord, Franklin, Inter-Lakes, Laconia, Merrimack Valley and Winnisquam. Each of those schools has been identified as a “double risk” site by the Norris Cotton Cancer Center, based upon the number of indoor tanning centers within a two-mile radius of the school and the number of female students in each school, since the most rapid rate of increase in melanoma is found among females ages 15-39.

In New Hampshire, nearly 400 new cases of melanoma are diagnosed each year, and the most likely causes include unhealthy tanning practices and exposure to the harmful UV rays of tanning beds.

“Our goal is to educate teens and young adults about the danger of tanning and the importance of early detection and prevention,” said Deb Girard, executive director of the Melanoma Foundation of New England, "and our collaboration with the NH Comprehensive Cancer Collaboration has made it possible to bring this project to the forefront in New Hampshire and drive home the messages to teens and their communities."

A day-long “Teens on Tanning Forum” will be held at the Red River Theatres in Concord on Feb. 18, in connection with the contest. The forum will offer students the opportunity to hear from young melanoma survivors, to develop leadership skills and to draft individual and community goals for tanning safety.

Participating high schools that compile the most pledges will be eligible for cash prizes, gift certificates, pizza parties and tickets to Six Flags New England. For more information about participating in "Your Skin Is In" and to register for “Teens on Tanning,” go to [www.MFNE.org](http://www.MFNE.org).

More information about the NH CCC Primary Prevention Workgroup can be found at [www.NHCancerPlan.org](http://www.NHCancerPlan.org).

The NH CCC is a partnership of individuals and organizations committed to eliminating cancer in the state. The New Hampshire Comprehensive Cancer Collaboration (NH CCC), a program managed by the Foundation for Healthy Communities, was established in 2004 to address one of the leading causes of death in New Hampshire (NH). The NH CCC developed the New Hampshire Comprehensive Cancer Control Plan to address the following priorities: preventing cancer by creating environments that support a healthy life style, increasing early detection of cancer through screening; improving the treatment of cancer and quality of life for people living with cancer; and reporting on the latest cancer research.

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