

# James Bezan

Member of Parliament for Selkirk-Interlake



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**NEWS RELEASE**  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **MP Bezan Sponsors Bill to Expose Tanning Cancer Risks**

*Law to promote tougher labeling rules on radiation-emitting tanning beds*

James Bezan, Member of Parliament for Selkirk-Interlake, will introduce a Private Member's Bill in the House of Commons to combat harmful radiation from tanning beds. The Bill will be designed to promote consumer awareness about the cancer risks of tanning especially for youth under 18 years of age.

"As we recognize World Cancer Day, too many Canadians remain unaware of the cancer risks from tanning and artificial tanning," said Mr. Bezan. "This Bill will help protect Canadians against this hidden health risk by introducing tougher labeling requirements on tanning beds."

In 2009, over 5000 Canadians were expected to be diagnosed with melanoma skin cancer resulting in at least 940 deaths. Non-melanoma skin cancer is the most common form of cancer among Canadians, with 75,100 expected cases in 2009 and 270 expected deaths.

The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), an agency of the World Health Organization, has classified tanning beds in their highest cancer risk category, calling tanning beds "carcinogenic to humans". The WHO recommends that youth under 18 years of age avoid use of tanning equipment.

MP Bezan's private member's bill will require that current radiation warning labels on tanning beds be made larger; placed in clear view of the user; draw a clear link between skin cancer and ultraviolet rays; and recommend that youth under 18 not use tanning beds. These warnings are not included on current labels.

Mr. Bezan said there is good evidence to suggest that tougher labeling is needed. "According to a recent study, in 87% of tanning salons radiation warning labels could not be seen," said Mr. Bezan. "Canadians need to know that tanning beds increase your risk of cancer, especially during our younger years." (2007 study of tanning salons conducted in the Toronto area by the Canadian Cancer Society).

Both the Canadian Cancer Society (CCS) and Canadian Dermatology Association (CDA) recommend that persons under the age of 18 be prohibited from using indoor

tanning salons and have indicated full support for strengthened labeling requirements on tanning beds.

“The Canadian Cancer Society is concerned about the very real threat to public health posed by indoor tanning,” said Aaron Levo, Director of Public Issues, Canadian Cancer Society. “We support the call for more strongly worded and prominent labeling on tanning beds.”

“The Canadian Dermatology Association strongly encourages governments at all levels to pass legislation regulating the use of artificial tanning equipment, and particularly to prohibit those under 18 from such exposure, which is proven to be carcinogenic to humans,” said Dr. Cheryl Rosen, National Director of CDA’s Sun Awareness Program and Head of Dermatology at Toronto Western Hospital and University Health Network Hospitals. “It is important to increase public awareness of the dangers of exposure to UV radiation from artificial tanning.”

Mr. Bezan said the inspiration for the Bill came from personal experience when his wife was diagnosed with two separate melanomas over the past several years.

“Like so many Canadians, my family has experienced the devastating impacts of skin cancer,” said Mr. Bezan. “It’s time we strike back against this hidden health risk and make Canadians aware of the hazards of regular and repeated exposure to ultraviolet radiation through tanning.”

-30-

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## Backgrounder: Tanning Beds and Cancer Risks

- Artificial tanning is an increasing trend. It is particularly strong among young people, with a majority of users being young women between the ages of 16 and 29 years (Dermatology Nursing, Vol.18, No. 3, June 2006).
- In 2009, the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC)—an agency of the World Health Organization—elevated tanning devices to their highest cancer risk category, calling tanning beds “carcinogenic to humans” (The Lancet Oncology, Vol. 10, August 2009).
- Young people are at risk. The IARC study found that users increase their risk of cancer by 75% if tanning begins before age 30 (Ibid).
- Stronger labeling is needed. In a 2007 study, the Canadian Cancer Society researchers found that 87% of salons in the GTA did not have radiation warning labels that could be clearly seen by users (Canadian Cancer Society, 2007).
- This Bill will require larger radiation warning labels on tanning beds placed in areas on the bed where they can clearly be seen by users. It will draw a clear link between tanning beds and cancer and recommend that persons under 18 avoid use. Neither is included in current labels.
- This initiative is consistent with growing global consensus. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) have indicated a move to stronger labelling for tanning beds. New Brunswick, Scotland, France, Germany and ...2

five Australian states have banned anyone under 18 from accessing artificial tanning equipment.

- In 2009, 5000 Canadians were expected to be diagnosed with melanoma skin cancer and with 940 deaths. Non-melanoma skin cancer is the most common form of cancer among Canadians, with 75,100 expected cases in 2009 and 270 expected deaths (Canadian Cancer Society, 2009)
- Skin cancer is the most common type of cancer. Since 1990, the number of skin cancer cases has increased by two-thirds (Canadian Cancer Society, 2008)
- Melanoma cancer is the third most common form of skin cancer in young women aged 15-29. It is more common than in men aged 15-29. (Canadian Cancer Society, 2009)
- Tanning is a \$1 billion dollar a year business with approximately 3,000 salons across Canada, according to Health Canada estimates (2005).