

# Parents support policies to limit teens' access to indoor tanning

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Research led by Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Institute found that almost two-thirds (65%) of parents of adolescents agreed with policies to ban indoor tanning for youth under age 18. About one-quarter of parents had no opinion (23%), and only 12% disagreed. Support for an indoor tanning ban was high across racial/ethnic groups and geographic regions of the U.S. The study appears online in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*.

Researchers from Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Institute, Georgetown University and the University of Minnesota surveyed 1,244 parents of children, ages 11-17, about age-based restrictions on indoor tanning. They found that parental support for bans was highest among parents who perceived the harms of indoor tanning for adolescents.

Indoor tanning is associated with an increased risk of skin cancer, including melanoma, and is especially harmful for those who begin use early in life. Accumulating evidence of indoor tanning harms has prompted public health leaders, including the World Health Organization and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, to categorize UV radiation as a carcinogen and prioritize the goal of reducing adolescents' use. The Affordable Care Act (ACA) established a 10% excise tax on indoor tanning. And, in 2015, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) proposed a rule, currently under consideration, to ban indoor tanning for those under 18.

However, ongoing consideration of ACA reform in Congress may

reverse existing national policies, including an excise tax on indoor tanning.

"Our study demonstrates parents' broad support of age-based restrictions on indoor tanning for adolescents, particularly when they've been informed of the health risks," said lead author Melissa B. Gilkey, PhD of Harvard Medical School's Department of Population Medicine at Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Institute. "This study provides valuable information on parents' attitudes toward the public health risks of indoor [tanning](#) that should inform public officials re-examining policies concerning the industry."

**More information:** Melissa B. Gilkey et al. Parental Support for Age-based Indoor Tanning Restrictions, *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* (2017). [DOI: 10.1016/j.amepre.2017.03.011](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amepre.2017.03.011)

Provided by Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Institute

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