

RESOLUTION

Subject: Support for Promoting Frequent Skin Examinations for Early Detection of Skin Cancer

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Referred to: Reference Committee

WHEREAS, skin cancer has become the most common cancer in the world; it is estimated that one in five people will develop skin cancer in their lifetime¹; and

WHEREAS, the primary culprit of skin cancer is UVB radiation from the sun that people are exposed to in high volumes while merely performing daily activities such as driving²; and

WHEREAS, human activity has led to stratospheric ozone depletion, which has allowed greater volumes of UVB radiation to penetrate the Earth and thereby has led to an increase in skin cancer incidence worldwide over the last few decades³; and

WHEREAS, Kentucky has a vast population who works in jobs such as agriculture and construction that require working for extensive periods in the direct sunlight, posing a greater risk for developing skin cancer⁴; and

WHEREAS, the Skin Cancer Foundation has stated that 99% of skin cancer deaths are preventable if the skin cancer is detected in the early stages and therefore recommends that every individual thoroughly scans their skin from head to toe monthly for any suspicious lesions¹; and

WHEREAS, the Kentucky Skin Cancer Center delineates a head to toe skin examination that includes areas that the general population who is not well-informed on the matter might not think to examine, such as fingernails, scalp, and genitals, which emphasizes the importance of promoting skin cancer screening education for Kentuckians⁹; and

WHEREAS, the Skin Cancer Foundation also recommends that physicians routinely examine their patients' skin in order to help them discover potentially cancerous lesions as early as possible, which would make a great impact on early skin cancer detection given the shortage of Dermatologists in Kentucky¹; and

WHEREAS, Melanoma is the deadliest of skin cancers due to its potential to quickly and aggressively metastasize to vital organs such as the lungs, giving patients a five-year survival rate of only 27% if it is not treated prior to metastasis⁵; and

WHEREAS, the incidence of Melanoma in Kentucky is 27.3%, and the death rate is 17% higher than the national average, making Melanoma a significant health burden on Kentuckians that needs to be addressed⁶; and

WHEREAS, the age-adjusted mortality rate for Melanoma for individuals less than 65 years of age in Kentucky is 66% as compared to the overall rate in the nation of 46%, which demonstrates that Melanoma affects Kentuckians at younger ages than many other cancers⁶; and

WHEREAS, skin cancer screening is a form of preventative care that the general population is recommended to get annually by the second decade of life, and even sooner if individuals have risk factors such as a family history of Melanoma, many moles, or prolonged sun exposure, which many hardworking Kentuckians have⁷; and

WHEREAS, the Kentucky Cancer Program distributes skin cancer screening and prevention materials along with materials about the cancers that the KMA already supports screening for such as prostate, cervical, breast, and colon, highlighting the growing significance of skin cancer⁸; and

WHEREAS, KMA current cancer screening policy states that the KMA “recognizes the necessity for and supports expansion of cancer screening”; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, the KMA encourages physicians to examine their patients’ skin and promotes the education of patients to perform monthly head to toe skin examinations in an effort to detect skin cancer in the early stages.

References:

- ¹ “Early Detection- Overview” The Skin Cancer Foundation (2021) <https://www.skincancer.org/early-detection/>
- ² “Skin Cancer Prevention” The Skin Cancer Foundation (2021) <https://www.skincancer.org/skincancer-prevention/>
- ³ “The influence of climate change on skin cancer incidence – A review of the evidence” International Journal of Women’s Dermatology (2021) <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2352647520301155#0005>
- ⁴ “The Cancer Crisis in Appalachia: Kentucky Students Take Action” The University Press of Kentucky (2020)
- ⁵ “Survival Rates for Melanoma Skin Cancer” The American Cancer Society (2021) <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/melanoma-skin-cancer/detection-diagnosis-staging/survival-rates-for-melanoma-skin-cancer-by-stage.html>
- ⁶ “State Cancer Profiles” The National Cancer Institute (2013-2017) <https://statecancerprofiles.cancer.gov/quick-profiles/index.php?statername=kentucky>
- ⁷ Dermatology Treatment and Research Center (2021) <https://www.dallasdermcenter.com/blog/the-importance-of-annual-skin-exams/>
- ⁸ “Prevention and Screening” The Kentucky Cancer Program <https://www.kycancerprogram.org/community-programs>
- ⁹ Kentucky Skin Cancer Center <https://www.kentuckyskincancercenter.com/services/skin-cancer-screeni>