September 12, 2014

Representative Carolyn Maloney
2308 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

RE: SUPPORT H.R. 5716/Melanoma Research Act of 2012

Dear Representative Maloney:

As President-Elect of the American Society for Dermatologic Surgery Association (ASDSA), a surgical specialty organization representing over 5,800 physician members, I am writing to express our strong support for H.R. 5716/Melanoma Research Act of 2012.

ASDSA member physicians strongly support skin cancer prevention and public education about the dangers of indoor tanning. Our dermatologic surgeons often treat some of the sickest and most complicated cases related to skin cancer and the subsequent removal of tissues in complex Mohs Surgery procedures. We applaud you for addressing this public health risk; Americans need to be aware that indoor tanning can cause cancer and we support your efforts to establish the Skin Cancer Research Fund.

Melanoma, the most deadly form of skin cancer, has been linked to indoor tanning. A scientific paper entitled, Recent Tanning Bed Use: A Risk Factor for Melanoma, stated that sun or UV radiation is one of the primary causal factors in the development of melanoma and that indoor tanning increases one’s risk of melanoma.¹ A 2006 study of the 100 most populous cities in the United States found that there was an average of 42 tanning salons per city. The same study demonstrated that 76% of teens lived within two miles of a tanning salon.² Not only are minors more susceptible to misinformation about indoor tanning, minors are increasing their use of indoor tanning devices and consequently, increasing their incidence of melanoma. Two studies presented at the Sixth World Congress on Melanoma reported an increase in melanoma rates among young women. Furthermore, the studies concluded that young women are six to seven times more likely to develop melanoma than young men, attributing that difference primarily to the prevalence of indoor tanning amongst young women. As a common cause of melanoma, consumers should be protected from the sea of misinformation about this dangerous activity.

In the interest of skin cancer research and prevention, ASDSA and its members stand ready to assist you with the passage of this bill. If you have any questions or need further information, please feel free to contact Kristin Hellquist, Director of Federal Advocacy and Practice Support at (847) 956-9144 or khellquist@asds.net.

Sincerely,

George J. Hruza, MD, President-Elect
American Society for Dermatologic Surgery Association

cc: Mitchel P. Goldman, MD, President
    Timothy C. Flynn, MD, Immediate Past President
    Naomi Lawrence, MD, Vice President
    Abel Torres, MD, Treasurer
    Murad Alam, MD, Secretary
    Katherine J. Duerdoth, CAE, Executive Director
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