March 7, 2017

The Honorable Paul Ryan The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Kevin Brady The Honorable Richard Neal
Chair Ranking Member
Committee on Ways & Means Committee on Ways & Means
U.S. House of Representatives U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Greg Walden The Honorable Frank Pallone
Chair Ranking Member
Committee on Energy & Commerce Committee on Energy & Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Pat Tiberi The Honorable Sander Levin
Chair Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Health Subcommittee on Health
Committee on Ways & Means Committee on Ways & Means
U.S. House of Representatives U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Michael Burgess The Honorable Gene Green
Chair Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Health Subcommittee on Health
Committee on Energy & Commerce Committee on Energy & Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives U.S. House of Representatives

Dear Speaker Ryan, Leader Pelosi, Chairman Brady, Ranking Member Neal, Chairman Walden, Ranking Member Pallone, Chairman Tiberi, Ranking Member Levin, Chairman Burgess and Ranking Member Green:

On behalf of the American Academy of Dermatology Association (Academy), which represents more than 13,500 dermatologists nationwide, I am writing to express opposition to the provision repealing the sales tax on indoor tanning services, contained within the American Health Care Act. With an epidemic of skin cancer which has grown to more than 4 million in number annually, dermatologists have made it a priority to advance public policies that promote prevention and education about skin cancer and the dangers of indoor tanning.

Skin cancer is the most commonly occurring cancer and current estimates are that at least 1 in 5 Americans will develop skin cancer in his or her lifetime. More than 419,000 cases of skin cancer in the U.S. each year are linked to indoor tanning. The annual cost of treating skin cancers overall in the U.S. is estimated at $8.1 billion: about $4.8 billion for non-melanoma skin cancers and $3.3 billion for melanoma. According to a 2016 estimate
from the Congressional Budget Office, repealing the indoor tanning tax would further burden Americans by adding $800 million to the deficit.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recognizes sunlamps as a human carcinogen. Even a single indoor tanning session can increase a patient’s risk of developing squamous cell carcinoma by 67 percent. Furthermore, minimal use of tanning beds before the age of 35 can increase a patient’s risk of developing melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer, by 59 percent.

By helping to raise awareness of the dangers of indoor tanning, the tax also can serve a deterrent to help mitigate the risks associated with indoor tanning which are often not shared with customers of indoor tanning facilities. A February 2012 study by the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Energy and Commerce found that 90 percent of employees of indoor tanning facilities claimed that indoor tanning presented no dangers, and more than half of those employees stated that indoor tanning did not increase the risks of skin cancer.

The Academy encourages Congress to address problems with our healthcare delivery system for our patients; however, the Academy strongly urges the removal of the provision that repeals the tax on indoor tanning services. The risks inherent in tanning bed are evident in our patients. The tanning tax appropriately reflects the carcinogenic effects of indoor tanning, and it is the desire of the Academy that the current federal tax on this activity remains in place as a deterrent to harmful behavior.

The Academy looks forward to continuing to work with you to improve health care for all Americans. Should you have any questions or if the Academy can be of assistance in any way, please do not hesitate to contact Shawn Friesen, the Academy’s Director, Legislative, Political & Grassroots Advocacy, at sfriesen@aad.org or 202-712-2601.

Sincerely,

Henry W. Lim, MD, FAAD
President American Academy of Dermatology Association