

May 1, 2023

The Honorable Paul Renner
Florida State House
420 The Capitol
402 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399

The Honorable Chuck Clemons
Florida State House
422 The Capitol
402 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399

The Honorable Michael Grant
Florida State House
322 The Capitol
402 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399

The Honorable Fentrice Driskell
Florida State House
316 The Capitol
402 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Re: HB785 Coverage for Skin Cancer Screenings Bill

Dear Speaker Renner, Speaker Pro Tempore Clemons, Majority Whip Grant, and Democratic Leader Driskell,

The undersigned organizations of the National Council on Skin Cancer Prevention (National Council) respectfully write to express our support for HB785, the Coverage for Skin Cancer Screenings Bill.

The National Council is an organization with the mission of serving as a “united voice to prevent skin cancer through education, advocacy and raising awareness.” The National Council’s members represent the nation’s premier researchers, clinicians, and advocates for melanoma and skin cancer prevention, and it plays a unique role in connecting more than 45 organizations, agencies, and associations in pursuing its mission.

The Coverage for Skin Cancer Screenings Bill would waive deductibles, copayments, and coinsurances for skin cancer screenings performed by a licensed dermatologist. Living in the “Sunshine State,” Floridians are at particularly high risk of developing skin cancer, with most melanomas, the deadliest form of skin cancer, caused by exposure to UV radiation. Unfortunately, skin cancer screenings are not a covered preventive benefit in the state of Florida, despite the high incidence of skin cancer.

Additionally, cutaneous melanoma is more prevalent in rural populations, approximately 5.7% of the state’s population as of 2018, often due to occupational risks, and rural patients tend to have higher mortality than urban counterparts due to being diagnosed with more advanced disease as a result of lower socioeconomic status that affects access to early detection screenings.¹⁻² As a result, those most vulnerable to melanoma are often those most unable to access screenings.

Early detection of melanoma is crucial for improving patient outcomes. Patients who are screened are more likely to have melanoma detected at an earlier stage and have a much better chance of

survival. Providing screenings at no cost to the patient will ensure that more Floridians have access to potentially life-saving preventive care.

- Florida ranks second in the nation for highest rate of new melanoma cases.³
- If a melanoma lesion is detected with a Breslow thickness of less than one millimeter, the five-year survival rate is between 95-100%.⁴ Unfortunately, the five-year survival rate plummets to 60 -75% once the lesion is greater than two millimeters and further declines to 37-50% for lesions over four millimeters.⁵
- Late-stage skin cancers place an increased economic burden on the health care system, including lost worker productivity, and increased financial burdens for patients and their caregivers. The estimated annual cost of treating all skin cancers rose from \$8.0 billion between 2012 and 2015 to \$8.9 billion between 2016 and 2018.⁶

HB785 will bring us one step closer to eliminating disparities in skin cancer detection and saving lives. Thank you for considering this important request. Should you have any questions, please contact me, at antonishak@skincancerprevention.org or call 301.801.4422.

Sincerely,



John D. Antonishak
Executive Director

Endorsing Organizations:

American Academy of Dermatology Association
American Skin Association
American Society for Mohs Surgery
American Society for Dermatologic Surgery
Arizona Skin Cancer Foundation
Colette Coyne Melanoma Awareness Campaign
Connect Melanoma
Dermatology Nurses' Association
IMPACT Melanoma
Jason Farley All In For A Cure Foundation
Melanoma Research Alliance
Melanoma Research Foundation
Outrun the Sun
Society for Pediatric Dermatology
Sun Safety for Kids
Warriors Against Melanoma

¹ Shellenberger, R. A., Johnson, T. M., Fayyaz, F., Swamy, B., Albright, J., & Geller, A. C. (2022). Disparities in melanoma incidence and mortality in rural versus urban Michigan. *Cancer reports (Hoboken, N.J.)*, e1713. Advance

online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cnr2.1713>

² https://fdotwww.blob.core.windows.net/sitefinity/docs/default-source/planning/policy/ruralsupport/florida-39-s-rural-areas_final-appb.pdf?sfvrsn=ac5f9ea2_2

³ <https://www.aimatmelanoma.org/melanoma-state-florida/#:~:text=~Florida%20ranks%20second%20in%20the,in%20the%20State%20of%20Florida.>

⁴ <https://melanoma.org/patients-caregivers/cutaneous-melanoma/diagnosis-cutaneous/>

⁵ *ibid*

⁶ Kao, S. Z., Ekwueme, D. U., Holman, D. M., Rim, S. H., Thomas, C. C., & Saraiya, M. (2022). Economic burden of skin cancer treatment in the USA: an analysis of the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey Data, 2012-2018. *Cancer causes & control: CCC*, 10.1007/s10552-022-01644-0. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10552-022-01644-0>