Dermatology Nurses’ Association Position Statement on the U.S. Surgeon General’s Call to Action to Prevent Skin Cancer

More than 5 million Americans are diagnosed with skin cancer each year, making it the most common cancer diagnosed in the United States. Although eight billion dollars is spent annually on treating skin cancer, one American dies every forty-five minutes from the disease. The Dermatology Nurses Association (DNA), a professional nursing organization, commends the Surgeon General for issuing a Call to Action to Prevent Skin Cancer (CTA). This position statement has been created to answer the CTA and address the goals. DNA believes that educating its members and the public is essential to promoting sun protection and skin cancer prevention in America.

CTA Strategic Goals

1. Increasing opportunities for sun protection in outdoor settings
2. Providing individuals with the information they need to make informed, healthy choices about ultraviolet (UV) radiation exposure
3. Promoting policies that advance the national goal of preventing skin cancer
4. Reducing harms from indoor tanning
5. Strengthening research, surveillance, monitoring, and evaluation related to skin cancer prevention.

In 2007, DNA officially endorsed the SunAWARE acronym for its skin cancer prevention messages and materials because it provides clear messages for both primary and secondary prevention. DNA later endorsed the SunAWARE program and curriculum. The SunAWARE acronym provides a framework to address the Surgeon General’s five strategic goals outlined in the CTA:

Avoiding unprotected UV exposure, seek shade, and never indoor tan (Goals 1 & 4).

Wear sun protective clothing, including broad brimmed hats, long sleeves, pants and sunglasses. (Goal 2)

Apply adequate amounts of a BROAD SPECTRUM sunscreen and reapply at least every two hours. (Goal 2)

Routinely check your whole body for new and changing growths, and report suspicious changes to a health care provider. (Goal 2)

Educate your family and community about sun protection and skin cancer prevention including the hazards of indoor tanning. (Goals 3, 4 & 5)
DNA’s strategies to educate membership and the public about prevention and early detection of skin cancer include:

1. Provide educational programming on skin cancer prevention at the DNA annual convention, chapter meetings, in journal publications, and on the DNA website.
2. Advocate for legislative action and policy that promotes UV protection and skin cancer prevention under the direction of the Health Policy and Advocacy Committee.
3. Provide professional, patient and public programs and educational resources; including Don’t Fry Day materials, SunAWARE resources, links to partner organizations that highlight educational initiatives, research and grant opportunities.
4. Implement Don’t Fry Day activities in conjunction with the National Council for Skin Cancer Prevention (NCSCP) utilizing both DNA and NCSCP educational resources in the workplace and the community. Don’t Fry Day is a national day of skin cancer awareness that occurs annually on the Friday before Memorial Day.
5. Develop SunAWARE materials utilizing member resources, and make them available on a SunAWARE webpage.
6. Assist members in conducting nursing research in the area of skin cancer prevention and early detection.
7. Utilize social media to highlight DNA’s skin cancer prevention initiatives and its members’ activities in response to the CTA.

Reference: