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February 16, 2024

The Honorable Senator Virginia Lyons
Senate Committee on Health and Welfare, Chair
Vermont State House
115 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05633

RE: Support for S.187 – Related to the Availability of Sunscreen for Students

Dear Chair Lyons,

On behalf of the Consumer Healthcare Products Association (CHPA), the national trade association representing the leading manufacturers of over-the-counter (OTC) medications, dietary supplements, and consumer medical devices, I'd like to express our support of S.187 – allowing public and private schools to permit students use of sunscreen.

This bill promotes self-care by eliminating barriers preventing students from taking protective measures against excessive exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation. We commend you and Senator Wrenner for sponsoring this legislation and support your efforts to safeguard Vermont students from the skin damaging rays of the sun.

The majority of Americans (68%) know that skin cancer is the most common cancer in the United States. However, only 42% protect their bodies from sun exposure with life-saving sunscreen.¹ This legislation will help promote among students the importance of routinely applying sunscreen prior to outdoor activities. Allowing students to carry and apply sunscreens at school, or during an outdoor activity, is a common-sense approach to lowering the skin cancer rate in the state – especially among young people.

Sunscreens are currently regulated as OTC drugs by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and a broad array of healthcare professionals recommend using a broad-spectrum sunscreen daily to prevent sunburn and ultimately skin cancer. According to the Skin Cancer Foundation, even one blistering sunburn in childhood or adolescence more than doubles your chances of developing melanoma later in life. Skin damage from exposure to UV rays builds up over time, so sun protection should start at an early age and continue for a lifetime.² OTC sunscreen products are an accessible and affordable defense for students to protect themselves from the sun's damaging UV rays.

27 states and Washington DC have already passed laws permitting student access to these safe and effective skin protection options and we strongly encourage the state of Vermont to do the same. We strongly encourage the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare to pass S.187. This bill represents smart public health policy that will benefit Vermont residents for years to come.

¹ <https://www.bcbs.com/the-health-of-america/infographics/should-we-be-wearing-more-sunscreen>

² <https://www.skincancer.org/risk-factors/sunburn/>



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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Carlos I. Gutiérrez'.

Carlos I. Gutiérrez
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