

TO: Senate Committee on Health and Welfare

FROM: Ilisa Stalberg, Division Director of Family and Child Health, Department of Health

DATE: February 16, 2024

SUBJECT: S. 187 Testimony Notes

Good morning and thank you for inviting the Department to testify on this bill.

- Cancer is a leading cause of death in Vermont.
- Vermonters have significantly higher rates of melanoma (~37 per 100,000) compared to the U.S. rates (~22 per 100,000).
 - This is on par w/ Australia, which has the highest incidence rate of melanoma in the world.
 - 9% of men and 7% women in VT have been diagnosed with melanoma.
- In the past year, ~ 3/4 of HS students reported having at least one sunburn.
- Currently in schools, sunscreen is treated like an OTC medication. This is because the FDA oversees regulation of sunscreen. This means:
 - The school nurse must store and administer the sunscreen, and in some cases, a student may require a doctor's note in order to use it.
 - An adult must bring the sunscreen (medicine) to school; and
 - The school nurse must document application each time;
- As a result, this can be a barrier to more effective prevention of melanoma and other skin cancers during school hours.
- It also creates a burden on school nurses to store and apply sunscreen.
- We know that sunscreen is effective at mitigating the risk of melanoma, especially when used throughout one's lifetime.





- This proposal will require schools to permit students to possess and self-administer sunscreen and allow school personnel to assist in applying that sunscreen with parent or guardian authorization.
- Doing so will reduce this barrier to the prevention of melanoma and offers a simple solution to a clear public health problem.
- Allowing students to possess and self-apply sunscreen at school can reduce barriers in the prevention of melanoma and other skin cancers during school hours.
- Acknowledging that school personnel are not required to apply sunscreen to students, store sunscreen in a specific location, and release them from potential liability of applying sunscreen to students, with parental permission, will reduce the burden currently placed on school nurses.
- 23 other states plus DC already allow this.
- AoE and the VT Schools Nurses Association support this proposal.

Thank you for your consideration of this bill.

