



Skin Cancer Prevention within Health Education

A Resolution of the American Association of Health Education (AAHE)

WHEREAS, it is the responsibility of professionals in health education, physical education, sports, recreation, and dance to promote and protect the health of the youth of this nation; and

WHEREAS, skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the United States, increasing at an epidemic rate, with one in five Americans developing skin cancer¹,

WHEREAS, exposure to ultraviolet (UV) light is responsible for 65%-90% of melanoma, which is the third most common and the most dangerous type of skin cancer, particularly in young people²,

WHEREAS, some effects of UV exposure are cumulative and exposure within childhood and adolescent years are extremely sensitive periods³,

WHEREAS, excessive UV exposure and a history of sunburns result in a cumulative effect that can weaken the skin's immune system and increase the risk of cancer⁴,

WHEREAS, adults working with youth have an opportunity to make a meaningful contribution to skin cancer prevention through increased awareness of the problems associated with UV light exposure and increased knowledge of prevention and risk reduction strategies; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the American Association for Health Education (AAHE) actively support educational programs to inform pre-K, elementary students, adolescents, parents, caretakers, and education professionals about the hazards of UV exposure, its detrimental effects on health, and appropriate prevention strategies; and be it further

RESOLVED, that AAHE support school districts in their efforts to develop written policies regarding the protection of students and teachers against increased sun exposure at official school functions; and be it further

RESOLVED, that AAHE encourage sport leaders, coaches, and athletes to take leadership roles in acting as role models and encourage the development of healthy sun-safe lifestyles and sun-safe policies; and be it further

RESOLVED, that AAHE participates in the National Coalition for Skin Cancer Prevention in Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Youth Sports; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this resolution be communicated to the American Association of School Administrators, National Association of Secondary School Principals, National Association for Elementary School Principals, the National Education Association, the American Federation of Teachers, the National Parent Teachers Association, National Collegiate Athletic Association and other relevant organizations.

References

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Skin Cancer: Basic Information. Available at: http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/skin/basic_info/. Accessed September 1, 2008.
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Guidelines for School Programs to Prevent Skin Cancer. *MMWR* 2002;51(No. RR-4):1–16.
3. Risk Factor Monitoring and Methods: Sun Exposure. National Cancer Institute. Available at: <http://riskfactor.cancer.gov/areas/exposure/>. Accessed September 1, 2008.
4. Mayo Clinic. Skin Cancer. Available at: <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/skin-cancer/DS00190/DSECTION=causes>. Accessed September 12, 2008.

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The mission of American Association of Health Education is to advance the profession by serving health educators and others who strive to promote the health of all people through education and other systematic strategies.

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