

Nebraska Scores Poorly in Fight Against Cancer

(Nebraska News Network / KLZA) -- An American Cancer Society study indicates Nebraska is doing a poor job in the fight against cancer. In a report card ranking the states for efforts to prevent and fight cancer, Nebraska received a passing grade on only one of ten criteria used. The ten criteria included things such as the amount of cigarette taxes, tobacco cessation program funding and the amount of phys ed required in schools. The single category where Nebraska had a passing grade was for the statewide smoking ban in public buildings.

David Holmquist with Nebraska's office of the Cancer Action Network says melanoma is affecting younger people all of the time. He is critical of Nebraska legislators for failing to pass age restrictions on tanning beds.

Only five states have banned everyone under 18 from using tanning beds, while seven states have put restrictions on tanning. Nebraska legislators considered, then threw out a bill that would have put age restrictions on indoor tanning beds, a move that is angering health care activists. Holmquist says skin cancer is striking women in their 20's who tanned a lot in their teens. They seem to be more at susceptible to the affects the infrared rays tanning beds provide.

According to the Cancer Society, more than 9,000 Nebraskans will be diagnosed with cancer this year and more than 3,000 will die from it. Holmquist calls prevention a huge issue and says a lot of melonomas can be prevented by not allowing anyone under 18 to use a tanning bed.

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