

January 18, 2019

Mr. Christopher J. Rondeau
Chief Executive Officer
Planet Fitness, LLC
26 Fox Run Road
Newington, NH 03801

Dear Mr. Rondeau,

The National Council on Skin Cancer Prevention (National Council) is writing to request that Planet Fitness, a leader in the fitness industry, discontinue providing tanning beds to fitness center patrons for the simple reason that ultra-violet (UV) emitting devices cause cancer. We are also writing to other national fitness leaders to do the same.

The National Council is an organization with the mission of serving as a “united voice to prevent skin cancer through education, advocacy and raising awareness.” The National Council’s members represent the nation’s premier researchers, clinicians, and advocates for melanoma and skin cancer prevention, and it plays a unique role in connecting more than 45 organizations, agencies, and associations in pursuing its mission. (SkinCancerPrevention.org)

Planet Fitness has hundreds of franchises across the country and give affordable access to physical activity to millions of Americans. Affordable fitness centers are of great service to public health given the association between physical activity and reduced mortality,¹ reduced incidence of heart disease,² diabetes,³ and most cancers.⁴ Unfortunately people who are physically active are at *increased* risk for one type of cancer--melanoma, the deadly form of skin cancer.⁴ We do not yet know the reason for this association, only that physically active adults need to mitigate this risk. The presence of tanning beds in fitness centers will have the opposite effect.

Skin cancer is the most prevalent cancer in the US and incidence of melanoma has doubled since 1973,⁵ coinciding with the rise in tanning salons over the same time period. Use of tanning beds is a major preventable risk factor for melanoma^{6,7} In the US and globally, we now have more cancers related to indoor tanning than tobacco.¹⁰ UV-emitting tanning devices are considered a Group 1 carcinogen, on the same level as tobacco, asbestos, and radon.⁷ None of these substances belong in a business which frames its branding around health and fitness.

Earlier this year, Sherry Pagoto, Ph.D. and her colleagues from the University of Connecticut, telephoned all locations of the Planet Fitness franchises across 27states. Of the 577 Planet Fitness locations contacted, 100% reported to have tanning beds, with a total of 2,800 tanning beds provided by your company.

This is concerning in light of a recent study showing that people who use tanning beds in gyms are particularly heavy users of tanning beds.¹¹ The study also found a link between physical activity and tanning such that the heaviest tanners are the most physically active. The link between physical activity and tanning coupled with the link between physical activity and melanoma is troubling.

Tanning beds provide absolutely no health benefits. The problem of tanning beds is so severe that in 2014 the US Surgeon General made a Call to Action to reduce indoor tanning in the United States.¹² The provision of tanning beds in fitness centers sends a confusing message to the public by associating tanning beds with a healthy lifestyle. This undermines public health messaging about the dangers of tanning.

Tanning beds have no place in fitness centers. Eliminating tanning beds from fitness centers aligns with the public health message that tanning is not a part of a healthy lifestyle. We implore Planet Fitness to put the health of its patrons first by ceasing to provide them access to this carcinogen.

The National Council looks forward to the opportunity to commend your company's efforts to protect the millions of Americans from the most prevalent cancer affecting our nation.

Should you have any questions, please contact me at 301.801.4422 or antonishak@skincancerprevention.org.

Sincerely,



John D. Antonishak
Executive Director

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