

Promoting Sun Safety in Colorado: Initiatives of the Colorado Skin Cancer Task Force

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Sun Safe Colorado^{1,2}

The Sun Safe Colorado program has been distributing evidence-based sun protection education programs to worksites, schools, and pediatric and adult clinics throughout the state. In 2006-08, managers and employees from 109 worksites, teachers at 446 schools, medical providers at nine clinics, and individuals staffing the 9News Health Fair have been trained to deliver education on primary and secondary prevention of skin cancer.



Democratic National Convention

The Skin Cancer Task Force worked with hotels in the Denver area to supply sun safety information and sunscreen to delegates and guests attending the Democratic National Convention.



Sun Safe Colorado for Preschools & Childcare Centers³

Sun Safe Colorado for Preschools and Childcare Centers hopes to improve staff knowledge about effective forms of sun protection for preschool age children, increase specific sun protection plans and policies at centers, and promote increased use of sun protection strategies with children while they are attending childcare centers. The parent intervention will be delivered to approximately 12,000 families throughout Colorado over the next three years.

Sun Safe Colorado Website⁴

The Sun Safe Colorado website is a three-tiered information resource for Coloradans to use at will. The website includes specific sun safety tools for schools, worksites and home life. In addition to the multiple resources www.sunsafecolorado.org has to offer, Colorado teachers are able to take an online, for-credit, course on school-based sun safety instruction being offered in collaboration with the University of Colorado Denver.

Get Online!

Colorado Kids Suncare Program⁵

The major aims of the Colorado Kids Suncare Program are to test the effectiveness of a tailored print sun protection intervention for parents of children born in 1998 and study nevus development between ages 6-8 years. The shifting of the focus of the intervention from parent to both parent and child reflects the growing independence of the child with respect to sun protection behaviors. Sun protection resources, including a sun hat, swim shirt, sunscreen, seeds to plant a tree (for shade), UV-related science activities, and a backpack to store sun protection items, were sent to children over the three years of intervention.



Go Sun Smart⁶

Go Sun Smart is a workplace sun safety program developed for the North American ski industry with funding from the National Cancer Institute. It successfully reduced sunburning among employees in a randomized trial at 26 ski areas. Currently, the program is testing the dissemination and impact of Go Sun Smart with the entire ski industry through a collaboration with the National Ski Areas Association.



Sun Safe Schools⁷

Sun Safe Schools is a research project funded by a grant from the National Cancer Institute. The aim of the project is to assist school districts in the creation and implementation of school board policies concerning sun safety and skin cancer prevention. The intervention districts get access to the Sun Safe Schools website along with visits and assistance from a sun safety consultant. School districts are encouraged to use these resources to learn what causes skin cancer and how to reduce risks for students information for school districts to become more sun safe, national guidelines, state regulations, sample policies and ways to implement a district-wide sun safety policy are featured.



Do Something on the.net⁸

Colorado Community College students are creating social marketing projects to create communication tools to teach people how to live healthier lives. DoSomethingOnThe.net provides training in social marketing and background materials on socially relevant topics, including skin cancer. DoSomethingOnThe.net also encourages students to use their new knowledge to create short social marketing ads and enter them in a contest.



Tanning Restrictions for Minors

Currently, 28 states restrict or reduce the ability of minors to use indoor tanning facilities. Seven additional states have introduced similar bills recently. In 2007, the Skin Cancer Task Force helped to educate the Colorado legislature about the importance of passing a bill in Colorado. That bill lost by one vote. In 2009, the Skin Cancer Task Force, in collaboration with the American Cancer Society and the Colorado Dermatologic Society, plan again to support legislation in Colorado to protect minors from the threat of skin cancer caused by indoor tanning.

The Skin Cancer Task Force, a branch of the Colorado Cancer Coalition, is a network of institutions, businesses and individuals working together to increase skin cancer prevention and screening practices and policies and to reduce the morbidity and mortality of skin cancer in Colorado to help meet the Colorado Cancer Plan 2010 Objectives for melanoma.

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The Skin Cancer Task Force is an all-volunteer subgroup of the Colorado Cancer Coalition comprised of physicians and other medical professionals, researchers, businesspersons, and citizens committed to education, prevention and early detection of skin cancer in Colorado. The Task Force is implementing sun safety programs designed to help meet the Colorado

Cancer Plan 2010 objectives for reducing melanoma morbidity and mortality. A major effort of the Task Force is Sun Safe Colorado, a program that has been underway since 2003 with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Colorado Chronic Disease Prevention Program (CCPD). Evidence-based sun protection education programs are being disseminated to worksites, schools, and pediatric and adult clinics. In 2006-08, managers and employees from 109 employers, teachers at 446 schools, medical providers at 9 clinics, and individuals staffing the 9News Health Fair have been trained to deliver education on primary and secondary prevention of skin cancer. CCPD also funded a new skin cancer prevention project in 2008, Sun Safe Colorado for Preschools and Childcare Centers. Task Force members

will promote sun protection for children to preschool operators and parents through workshops, educational materials, and mini-grants to support shade construction. The Sun Safe Colorado website, www.sunsafecolorado.org, includes an online course for teachers on school-based sun safety instruction being offered in collaboration with the University of Colorado Denver. In August 2008, the Task Force worked with hotels in the Denver area to supply sun safety information and sunscreen to delegates and guests attending the Democratic National Convention. Several Task Force members are conducting research to develop more effective strategies to promote sun protection with unique populations. In the Colorado Kids Suncare project, the effectiveness of tailored print educational materials is being tested

with parents and children (aged 10). The Sun Safe Schools project involves examining a strategy to help public school districts in Colorado adopt sun protection policies for students. In the Go Sun Smart project, methods to improve distribution and use of an evidence-based sun protection program for employees and guests of ski areas have been evaluated. Task Force members have also documented that the indoor tanning industry is a prominent advertiser in high school newspapers in Colorado which reach older adolescents, the age when indoor tanning is initiated. The variety of expertise, experience, contacts, and interests of Task Force members has contributed to creating a multi-faceted sustained effort to prevent skin cancer in Colorado.