

Castle Urges FDA to Upgrade Sunscreen Standard to Protect All Americans from Harmful Rays Leading to Skin Cancer -- April 12, 2007

REHOBOTH BEACH, DE -- Citing a statistic that over 190 Delawareans will be diagnosed with melanoma of the skin this year alone, Delaware Congressman Mike Castle today gathered with the American Cancer Society and Citizens for Sun Protection at Rehoboth Beach to draw attention to the issue of skin cancer and what can be done to reduce risks. Castle released a letter he wrote to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration urging them to issue a new sunscreen standard to protect all Americans from harmful UVA and UVB rays.

"As the summer season approaches and Delawareans and tourists alike flock to our beaches, the issue of sun safety should be foremost on their minds. But in reality, we should be thinking about this issue all year long -- the sun doesn't just shine in the summer," Castle said.

"We know some of the risks leading to skin cancer -- familial history, excessive sun exposure, history of sunburns, use of tanning beds as well as many others. And we need to be doing all we can to protect ourselves and our families from this cancer. That is why I calling on the Food and Drug Administration to increase their sunscreen standard, to include UVA rays, as well as UVB rays -- both of which lead to skin cancer according to dermatologists-- in their sunscreen standard," Castle said.

Currently, FDA only requires sunscreens to provide protection against UVB radiation; the portion of the UV spectrum that causes sunburn and contributes to incidence of skin cancer. However, no specific FDA requirements exist for protection against UVA radiation; the harmful rays that dermatologists agree are a major cause of skin cancer and pre-mature aging.

The FDA has been directed by the FY06 Agriculture Appropriations Bill to issue a new comprehensive sunscreen standard including both UVB and UVA by June 06 but to date it has not done so.

Castle has written a letter to the FDA urging them to complete this standard quickly so Americans will be provided with optimum protection against skin cancer.

A Copy of Castle's Letter is attached to this Press Release

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March 2, 2007

Andrew von Eschenbach

Commissioner

Food and Drug Administration

Dear Commissioner von Eschenbach,

I am writing to express our strong support for the Food and Drug Administration to issue a comprehensive sunscreen monograph standard that provides Americans with optimum protection against skin cancer. As you know, rising skin cancer rates pose a growing threat to the American public, and my constituents have made me particularly aware and concerned about this issue.

Currently, FDA only requires sunscreens to provide protection against UVB radiation; the portion of the UV spectrum that causes sunburn and contributes to incidence of skin cancer. However, no specific FDA requirements exist for protection against UVA radiation; the harmful rays that dermatologists agree are a major cause of skin cancer and pre-mature aging. I find this extremely concerning, since many other countries, including the European community, have adopted strong sunscreen standards that require protection from both UVA and UVB rays to protect their citizens. As such, I urge you to harmonize U.S sunscreen standards with those recently adopted by the European Union, which provide optimum protection against skin cancer.

One American dies every hour from skin cancer, and the aggregate healthcare costs associated with its treatment and detection are among the highest of any form of cancer due to its frequency. Despite these alarming statistics, and a Congressional directive in FY 2006 Agriculture appropriations bill calling for FDA to complete the sunscreen monograph by June 2006, the issue remains unresolved.

Please take the necessary steps to quickly adopt comprehensive sunscreen standards that require 'broad-spectrum' UV protection and specify robust protection standards for both UVA and UVB rays. Broad-spectrum sunscreen standards will help reduce America's risk of skin cancer and curb the health care costs associated with skin cancer.

Thank you for your interest in this matter and I look forward to receiving your response. In the mean time, please do not hesitate to contact me or Elizabeth Wenk of my staff at 202-225-4165.

Sincerely,

Michael N. Castle

MEMBER OF CONGRESS