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News Release

Worship Your Skin, Not the Sun

UDOH encourages all Utahns to practice sun safety

Salt Lake City – This year, more than 600 Utahns – or approximately 12 people every week - will develop skin cancer. As summer approaches, the Utah Department of Health (UDOH) and Utah Cancer Action Network (UCAN) are reminding Utahns to be safe in the sun by covering up, seeking shade, and avoiding the sun during the hottest time of the day.

Utah has the second highest rate of melanoma skin cancer in the country (28.1 per 100,000). People who live in areas with high elevation, warm climates, and where sunlight can be reflected by sand, water, snow, and ice have a greater chance of developing melanoma, the deadliest of all skin cancers.

“The risk of melanoma is also increases by overexposure to the sun and the use of indoor tanning beds,” said Teresa Garrett, Division Director, UDOH Disease Control and Prevention. “There are simple ways to protect yourself and your children from skin cancer, like wearing sunscreen with SPF 15 or higher, wearing a wide brim hat, sunglasses, long shorts or pants and shirts with sleeves, and finding shade when you spend time outdoors,” Garrett said.

The UDOH Utah Cancer Control Program (UCCP) will soon be running ads encouraging sun safety in local movie theaters. The program is also partnering with Salt Lake County Parks and Recreation, Basin Recreation in Summit County, and pro soccer player Chris Wingert, to raise awareness of sun safety. With funding from the Prevent Cancer

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Foundation, Wingert will talk about sun protection with youth soccer players, their parents, and coaches.

“Over the past couple of years I’ve thought a lot about how unaware most children are of the damage that the sun can cause,” said Wingert. “I love the sun as much as anyone, so I’m hopeful that by getting involved in a program like this, I can help others become aware of the dangers while still being able to enjoy the outdoors.”

For more information on skin cancer prevention and education, visit www.ucan.cc

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The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death, assuring access to affordable, quality health care, and promoting healthy lifestyles.