

The National Council on Skin Cancer Prevention has presented the University of Nebraska with the Platinum Level Skin Smart Campus (SCC) Award.

The award, presented May 20th, 2021, recognizes the university system's commitment to ensuring the well-being of its students in providing a safe, healthy learning and living environment on and off campus. That commitment includes keeping indoor tanning devices off its campus and out of its affiliated buildings and promoting skin cancer prevention and sun safety education. UNMC has been awarded two sunscreen dispensers by the National Council on Skin Cancer Prevention, which will be placed near green spaces and outdoor dining areas on the UNMC and UNL campuses.



"We are so proud of our grassroots effort to promote sun safety and skin cancer prevention at UNMC and across all the NU campuses," said Ashley Wysong, MD, chair of the UNMC Department of Dermatology. "Skin cancer rates in the state of Nebraska have continued to climb, particularly among younger individuals. These types of public health efforts in skin cancer prevention are key for improving the health of our Nebraska communities."

The Indoor Tan-Free Skin Smart Campus Initiative was developed in response to the 2014 U.S. Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent Skin Cancer, which found a strong association between an increased risk of skin cancer and indoor tanning use. Numerous studies have found that skin cancer is the most common type of cancer in the United States, with melanoma -- the deadliest form of skin cancer -- as one of the most common cancers diagnosed among young adults. According to The International Agency for Research on Cancer Working Group, the use of indoor tanning facilities before age 35 increases the risk for melanoma by 75 percent.

NU's journey to join the Skin Smart Campus Initiative has been a grassroots effort led by Dr. Wysong's team and UNMC College of Medicine students Marissa Lobl, Aubree Ford, Taylor Thieman, Heng Jiang, Rachel Samuelson and Blake Hass, who helped advocate one or more of the criteria required to become a skin smart campus.

UNMC's department of dermatology also created a Sun Protection Outreach Teaching by Students (SPOTS) team composed of medical students who visit local schools and share sun safe habits, skin cancer detection and prevention and the importance of avoiding artificial tanning beds. The team already has reached more than 100 Nebraska students with plans to expand its reach. UNMC Dermatology also partners with such national organizations as the Women's Dermatologic Society and the American Academy of Dermatology to host sun safety events and perform free skin cancer screenings.



[Learn more about the SCC initiative and facts about skin cancer prevention.](#)

Prevention is key, Dr. Wysong said, noting a 2019 JAMA Dermatology editorial in which former U.S. Surgeon General Boris Lushniak, MD, acknowledged the success of the Skin Smart Campus Initiative. When prevention works, he said, "there is no disease and therefore nothing bad happens to the person."