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October 15, 2025

The Honorable Robert F. Kennedy Jr.
Secretary, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Chair, Make America Healthy Again (MAHA) Commission
200 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20201

RE: MAHA Commission Strategy to Make Our Children Healthy Again

Dear Secretary Kennedy,

On behalf of the American Academy of Dermatology Association (Academy), **we write to express our strong support for the Make America Healthy Again (MAHA) Commission's Make Our Children Healthy Again strategy, which recognizes the importance of sunscreen and commits to improvements in sunscreen innovation and regulation. We would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you to explore potential areas of collaboration in advancing this important initiative that will strengthen public health and protect children from preventable sun damage.**

As the leading society in dermatological care, representing nearly 17,500 dermatologists nationwide, the Academy is committed to excellence in the medical and surgical treatment of skin disease, advocating for high standards in clinical practice, education, and research in dermatology and dermatopathology; and driving continuous improvement in patient care and outcomes while reducing the burden of disease.

The Academy commends the Commission's strategy and its recommendations to advance regulatory policies that ensure patient and public access to innovative sunscreen products, which are essential to preventing skin cancer and protecting overall skin health. We were particularly encouraged by the commitment that "FDA will promote innovation in the sunscreen market, and improve regulatory processes for over-the-counter sunscreen, which has fallen behind..." This initiative underscores the critical role sunscreen plays in disease prevention and public health.

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Numerous studies show an alarming increase in skin cancer among young adults, much of which can be traced to sunburns and excessive sun exposure in childhood. Intermittent sun exposure early in life significantly increases the risk of squamous cell carcinoma, basal cell carcinoma, and melanoma.^{1 2 3 4 5} Experiencing five or more blistering sunburns during adolescence can raise melanoma risk^{6 7} by 80 percent and nonmelanoma skin cancer risk by 68 percent.⁵ Furthermore, children with photosensitivity disorders face an even greater risk of skin damage and injury without adequate sun protection.

By advancing sunscreen innovation, modernizing regulatory processes, and enhancing public health awareness, the Administration can help protect children from preventable sun damage and reduce their lifetime risk of skin cancer. The Academy stands ready to assist in these efforts to help ensure that these commitments lead to meaningful improvements in patient care and public health.

Thank you for your leadership and vision. We look forward to partnering with your team and with the FDA to turn this strategy into real-world progress. If you have any questions about the recommendations in this letter, please contact Jillian Dunn, Associate Director of Health Policy and Payment, jdunn@aad.org or (202) 609-6313.

Sincerely,



Susan C. Taylor, MD, FAAD
President, American Academy of Dermatology Association

¹ Lin JS, Eder M, Weinmann S. Behavioral counseling to prevent skin cancer: a systematic review for the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force. *Ann Intern Med.* 2011 Feb 1;154(3):190-201. Review

² Stockfleth E, Revol O. Encouraging sun protection early in life: from a successful prevention programme in children to the identification of psychological barriers in adolescents. *J Eur Acad Dermatol Venereol.* 2022;36 Suppl 6:12-21. doi:10.1111/jdv.18194

³ Iannaccone MR, Wang W, Stockwell HG, et al. Patterns and timing of sunlight exposure and risk of basal cell and squamous cell carcinomas of the skin--a case-control study. *BMC Cancer.* 2012;12:417. Published 2012 Sep 20. doi:10.1186/1471-2407-12-417

⁴ Lergenmuller S, Rueegg CS, Perrier F, et al. Lifetime Sunburn Trajectories and Associated Risks of Cutaneous Melanoma and Squamous Cell Carcinoma Among a Cohort of Norwegian Women. *JAMA Dermatol.* 2022;158(12):1367-1377. doi:10.1001/jamadermatol.2022.4053

⁵ Wu S, Han J, Laden F, Qureshi AA. Long-term ultraviolet flux, other potential risk factors, and skin cancer risk: a cohort study. *Cancer Epidemiol Biomarkers Prev.* 2014;23(6):1080-1089. doi:10.1158/1055-9965.EPI-13-0821

⁶ Dennis, Leslie K. et al. "Sunburns and Risk of Cutaneous Melanoma, Does Age Matter: A Comprehensive Meta-Analysis." *Annals of epidemiology* 18.8 (2008): 614-627.

⁷ Watts CG, Drummond M, Goumas C, et al. Sunscreen Use and Melanoma Risk Among Young Australian Adults. *JAMA Dermatol.* 2018;154(9):1001-1009. doi:10.1001/jamadermatol.2018.1774