For Immediate Release: December 18, 2014

Contact: Lauren Smith Dyer
(202) 742-5918
M: (202) 870-8827
LSmithDyer@melanoma.org

Congressional Committee and the Melanoma Research Foundation
Take Steps to Stop College Tanning
Letter Issued to 18 of the Nation’s Largest Universities, Urging Them to Discontinue the Practice of Allowing Students to Use School Debit Cards to Pay for Indoor Tanning

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Today the House Committee on Energy and Commerce issued a letter, drafted by Congressman Henry Waxman (D-CA) and signed by Representatives Frank Pallone (D-NJ), Carolyn Maloney (D-NY), Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) and Charles Dent (R-PA), to the Chancellors of 18 universities urging them to end the practice of allowing students to use university debit cards to pay for indoor tanning. The Melanoma Research Foundation (MRF) commends the Committee for taking an unambiguous step in calling out the dangers of indoor tanning.

A recent study published in the Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology found that 18 of the nation’s largest universities allow students to use their university debit card to pay for sessions at local tanning salons. Letters have been sent to the Chancellors of the University of Alabama, University of Georgia, Georgia Southern University, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Indiana University, Western Kentucky University, Michigan State University, University of Mississippi, University of New Hampshire, Southern New Hampshire University, Rutgers, Ohio State University, Penn State, University of Pittsburgh, Clemson University, University of Texas at Austin, University of Vermont, and Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

The dangers of tanning beds are well-documented in research, and the role of tanning bed use in the rising rate of melanoma diagnoses is clear:

- The risk of developing melanoma increases by 75 percent for individuals who have been exposed to radiation from indoor tanning beds, and the risk increases with each use
- Melanoma is the deadliest and most common form of cancer for young adults 25-29 years old, and
• It is the second most common cancer for adolescents and young adults, ages 15-29

The MRF believes that allowing students to use school debit cards at tanning salons encourages them to engage in a behavior that endangers their health. We hope that these institutions will review medical evidence and immediately end agreements that put their students’ health at risk.

# # #

About Melanoma
Melanoma is one of the fastest growing cancers in the United States and can strike men and women of all ages, all races and skin types. With a one in 50 lifetime risk of developing melanoma, nearly 77,000 Americans are expected to be diagnosed with the disease in 2014, resulting in almost 10,000 deaths. Melanoma is the most common form of cancer for young adults 25- to 29-years-old and the second most common cancer in adolescents and young adults 15- to 29-years-old.

The majority of melanomas occur on the skin; in fact, melanoma is the most serious type of skin cancer. Melanoma can also occur in the eye (ocular, or uveal melanoma), in mucous membranes (mucosal melanoma), or even beneath fingernails or toenails.

About the Melanoma Research Foundation
The Melanoma Research Foundation (MRF) is the largest independent organization devoted to melanoma. Committed to the support of medical research in finding effective treatments and eventually a cure for melanoma, the MRF also educates patients and physicians about prevention, diagnosis and the treatment of melanoma. The MRF is an active advocate for the melanoma community, helping to raise awareness of this disease and the need for a cure. The MRF’s website is the premier source for melanoma information seekers. More information is available at www.melanoma.org. Find the MRF on Facebook and Twitter.