

Assembly Concurrent Resolution

No. 35

**Introduced by Assembly Members Thomson and Pavley
(Coauthors: Assembly Members Aanestad, Chan, Chavez,
Harman, Havice, Robert Pacheco, and Runner)**

March 12, 2001

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 35—Relative to skin cancer and melanoma awareness.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 35, as introduced, Thomson. Skin cancer and melanoma awareness.

This measure would declare that the month of May shall be recognized as Skin Cancer Awareness Month in California, and would encourage all Californians to make themselves and their families aware of the risk of skin cancer and the preventive measures. The measure would also proclaim May 7, 2001, as Melanoma Awareness Monday in California, to increase public awareness of the importance of routine complete skin examination to detect early melanoma.

Fiscal committee: no.

- 1 WHEREAS, Malignant melanoma, a serious skin cancer, is
- 2 characterized by the uncontrolled growth of pigment-producing
- 3 tanning cells; and
- 4 WHEREAS, Melanoma has its beginnings in melanocytes, the
- 5 skin cells that produce the dark protective pigment called melanin.
- 6 Melanomas may suddenly appear without warning, but may also
- 7 begin in or near a mole or other dark spot in the skin; and

1 WHEREAS, Melanoma generally begins as a mottled, light
2 brown to black flat blemish with irregular borders, usually at least
3 one-quarter inch in size. It may turn shades of red, blue or white,
4 crust on the surface or bleed, and most frequently appears on the
5 upper back torso, lower legs, head and neck; and

6 WHEREAS, Excessive exposure to the ultraviolet radiation of
7 the sun is the most important preventable cause of melanoma.
8 Other possible causes include genetic factors and immune
9 deficiencies. Malignant melanoma has also been linked to past
10 sunburns and sun exposure at younger ages; and

11 WHEREAS, Melanoma can affect men, women, and children,
12 but individuals with increased risk include those with fair
13 complexions, prior significant sunburns, a family member with
14 melanoma, or a high number of atypical moles; and

15 WHEREAS, Atypical moles are unusual moles that are
16 generally larger than normal moles, variable in color, often have
17 irregular borders, and may occur in far greater number than regular
18 moles; and

19 WHEREAS, The incidence of melanoma has doubled in the last
20 20 years, and it continues to rise faster than any other cancer in
21 women, except for lung cancer. Melanoma is the most common
22 form of cancer among people between 25 and 29 years of age, and
23 experts estimate that if the present rate continues, soon melanoma
24 will strike one in 75 Americans; and

25 WHEREAS, Six out of seven skin cancer deaths are from
26 malignant melanoma. Advanced malignant melanoma spreads to
27 other organs and may result in death. When detected early, surgical
28 removal of thin melanomas can cure the disease in most cases; and

29 WHEREAS, Early detection is crucial. There is a direct
30 correlation between the thickness of the melanoma and the
31 survival rate. If a melanoma is detected and treated early, the cure
32 rate is very high. Generally, as the disease advances, the tumor
33 thickens and spreads, lowering the survival rate; and

34 WHEREAS, Correct aggressive treatment by qualified medical
35 professionals can lead to positive results; and

36 WHEREAS, Melanoma in its early stages may only be detected
37 by visual inspection. Dermatologists recommend regular
38 self-examination of the skin to detect changes in its appearance,
39 especially changes in existing moles or blemishes. Additionally,



1 patients with risk factors should have a complete skin examination
2 annually; now, therefore, be it

3 *Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate*
4 *thereof concurring,* That the month of May 2001 shall be
5 recognized as Skin Cancer Awareness Month in California, and all
6 Californians be encouraged to make themselves and their families
7 aware of the risk of skin cancer and the preventive measures; and
8 be it further

9 *Resolved,* That the Legislature hereby proclaims May 7, 2001,
10 as Melanoma Awareness Monday in California to increase public
11 awareness of the importance of routine complete skin examination
12 to detect early melanomas.

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