

What is more important -- sun tanning or health?

For the fourth year, the Sharon High School junior and senior classes participated in the "No Tanning Pledge." This program is sponsored by the Melanoma Foundation of New England (MFNE) and encourages safe tanning practices such as not using a tanning booth or having unprotected exposure to the sun.

Sharon Public Health Nurse Sheila Miller, Ashley Sarnie and Briana Smith from Curry College School of Nursing and Katie Centola from UMASS Boston Graduate School brought the facts about tanning to the high school. The nursing students distributed sunscreen samples, discussed risk factors for skin cancer and utilized the American Cancer Society's skin analyzer to show facial sun damage.

Students learned about the dangers of using tanning booths, the importance of sunscreen and decided whether or not they wanted to take the "No Tanning Pledge." Fifty-nine percent of both the junior and senior class took the pledge to stay out of tanning booths before prom.

Melanoma, a type of skin cancer caused by tanning, is the second most common cancer for ages 15-29. Skin cancer can be prevented by avoiding the sun in the afternoon, wearing sunscreen and protective clothing, and by refraining from using tanning booths.

We would like to thank Lisa Joliceur and the entire junior and senior class for their help and participation as well as a special thank you to Jennerations Salon (Mansfield) for providing spray tan coupons. See you next year and remember "Your skin is in!"