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Skin Cancer Prevention Initiative

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The purpose of this project is to raise awareness among students, parents, school personnel and campers in New York State regarding the relationship between childhood sun exposure and increased risk for skin cancer later in life. This project demonstrates the role schools and camps play in sun protection and building awareness around risk factors for skin cancer. The first part of the initiative involves schools. In 2007-2008, all public and private elementary schools in NYS are encouraged to promote sun safety by participating in a statewide poster contest in collaboration with the Shade Foundation, a national non profit organization dedicated to skin cancer prevention. Each student in a school can submit one poster that depicts how to reduce one's risk for overexposure to the sun. The NYS contest winner is entered into the national contest to compete for a trip to Walt Disney World and the winning poster in NYS also will be used on NYSDOH public education materials in 2008. The second part of the initiative involves a new collaboration between the NYSDOH and the YMCAs of NYS, Inc. (YNYS) to promote sun protection interventions at 11 of their overnight summer camps across NYS. YMCA camps provide an opportunity to reach a large and diverse population of 27,000. The NYSDOH is currently working collaboratively with the YNYS' Camp Advisory Committee to design, implement and promote a multi-faceted initiative to strongly encourage and empower these camps to make sustainable policy, system and environmental changes.