

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## MAY IS MELANOMA AWARENESS MONTH

**TORONTO, ONTARIO (April 30, 2019)** – This year, for Melanoma Month, Save Your Skin Foundation will bring awareness to the following issues:

- Skin cancer rates in Canada continue to rise, including melanoma, [ocular melanoma](#), and non-melanoma skin cancers.
- Now is the time for increased preventative efforts and methods of early detection, particularly in the form of public education, public policy and built environments.
- Too many gaps still exist in patient care, particularly around [lack of resources for psycho-social support](#), lack of treatment for pre-stage IV patients and [unequal access to life-saving treatments](#).

### **Skin Cancer in Canada is still on the rise**

Skin cancer is a serious disease. It is the most common type of cancer. It is also one of the most preventable. Over 80,000 cases of skin cancer are diagnosed in Canada each year, of which more than 7,200 are melanoma, the mostly deadly form of skin cancer. In its late stages, the average life expectancy for melanoma is just six months, with a one-year survival rate of only 25 per cent, making metastatic melanoma one of the most aggressive forms of cancer and one of the deadliest forms of skin cancer. It is estimated that 1,200 Canadians lost their lives to melanoma in 2017 ([Canadian Cancer Society's Advisory Committee on Cancer Statistics, Canadian Cancer Statistics 2017, Toronto, ON: Canadian Cancer Society; 2017. Available at: cancer.ca/Canadian-CancerStatistics-2017-EN.pdf \(accessed April 2018\)](#)).

### **Skin Cancer is 90% Preventable**

Skin cancer rates have continued to rise in Canada over the last several decades, despite being 90% preventable ([Koh HK, Geller AC, Miller DR, et al. Prevention and early detection strategies for melanoma and skin cancer: Current status. Arch Dermatol. 1996; 132\(4\):436-442](#)). It is clear that messages of sun safety and prevention are not getting through. For this reason, we will be working to ask policy makers to build sun safety requirements into child and youth education, and the building of public spaces and parks. Information on the best sun safety practices can be found [here](#).

### **Early Detection Increases Survival**

Moles are the most common indication of melanoma and other skin cancers; luckily, they can be kept track of with skin self-examinations. That is why it is important to [perform a skin self-examination](#) all over the body once a month using the “[ABCDEFG](#)” guidelines, and have a physician check head-to-toe once per year.

### **Gaps in Patient Care**

Many gaps still exist in patient care, particularly around [lack of resources for psycho-social support](#), lack of treatment for Adjuvant (pre-stage IV) patients and [unequal access to life-saving treatments](#).

### **About Save Your Skin Foundation**

Save Your Skin Foundation (SYSF) is a national patient-led not-for-profit group dedicated to the fight against non-melanoma skin cancers, melanoma and ocular melanoma through nationwide education, advocacy, and awareness initiatives. Save Your Skin Foundation is committed to playing an active role in reducing the incidence of skin cancer in Canada, and to providing compassionate support for all Canadians living with skin cancers. Please visit [saveyourskin.ca](#) for more information.

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