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## **For Immediate Release**

### **Cover Up!**

#### **May is National Melanoma Awareness Month**

*The Cancer Institute of New Jersey Encourages all New Jerseyans to Be Sun Safe*

Melanoma, the most serious form of skin cancer, accounts for roughly only 4% of skin cancer cases, but is the most deadly when left undetected and untreated. In New Jersey alone, more than 1,890 new cases will be identified this year, with two-thirds of those cases being attributed to sun exposure.

With the summer months fast approaching, The Cancer Institute of New Jersey encourages all New Jerseyans to be sun safe and to cover up when outdoors. Spending a day at the shore? Entertaining with friends in the backyard? With the following list, we can all help safeguard our skin against the damaging rays and more safely enjoy summertime activities.

- Avoid prolonged sun exposure and limit outdoor activities between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. when the sun's harmful UV rays are the strongest.
- Apply sunscreen approximately one half-hour before going outdoors. Make sure your sunscreen has a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or higher and apply often, especially after swimming or water sports. Lip balm with an SPF of 15 or higher should also be used to protect your lips.
- Wear protective clothing, such as a wide-brimmed hat, visor or sunglasses while exposed to the sunlight. Be sure your eye protection meets the UV-protective standards.
- Teach children good sun protection habits at an early age and encourage them to be sun safe. Approximately 80% of lifetime sun damage occurs before the age of 18.
- Avoid indoor tanning devices, as they can be just as harmful as outdoor sun exposure.

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## **More about Melanoma**

Melanoma is a cancer that begins in the melanocytes, a type of cell that is present in the epidermis (skin layer). Melanocytes cells produce the pigment called melanin. Melanin gives the tan or brown color to skin and helps protect the deeper layers of the skin from the harmful effects of the sun.

Because melanoma is almost always curable in its early stages, it's important to check your own skin about once per month and become familiar with the pattern of moles, freckles, and other marks on your body so that you'll notice any changes. Below are the ABC's of mole irregularities you should be on the look out for. If you notice any abnormalities, or have a mole that has changed in any way, make an appointment to see your doctor so that a proper examination can be done.

- **Asymmetry**-Unequal or asymmetric moles
- **Border**-Moles with irregular, notched, scalloped or indistinct borders
- **Color**-Variation of color (i.e. different shades of browns, blues, reds, whites and blacks)
- **Diameter**-A mole that is larger than the size of a pencil's eraser
- **Elevation**-Moles that are elevated or raised from the skin

## **CINJ Experts**

The following CINJ experts are available to comment on a variety of skin cancer-related topics from research to treatment, to education, advocacy and the importance of practicing sun safety.

Joseph Germino, M.D., Ph.D., Medical Oncologist, CINJ

*Dr. Germino is Co-Director of CINJ's Melanoma and Soft Tissue Program and Professor of Medicine, UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School.*

James Goydos, M.D., Surgical Oncologist, CINJ

*Dr. Goydos is Co-Director of CINJ's Melanoma and Soft Tissue Program and Professor of Medicine, UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School.*

Drs. Germino and Goydos are involved in basic laboratory and clinical research in an effort to better understand the causes and mechanisms of cancer. ***Please call Courtney DeNicola, at 732/235-9872 or e-mail, denicoca@umdnj.edu if you wish to speak to one of our experts.***

The Cancer Institute of New Jersey is the state's first and only National Cancer Institute-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center, and is dedicated to improving the prevention, detection, treatment and care of patients with cancer. CINJ's physician-scientists engage in translational research, transforming their laboratory discoveries into clinical practice quite literally bringing research to life. The Cancer Institute of New Jersey is a Center of Excellence of UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School.

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