



For Immediate Release

Media Contact:

Teri Festa

teri@rayfesta.org

201.563.5404

Pro SunSmart™ Makes Salon Professionals Lifesavers

Stylists Can See Early Warning Signs of Melanoma

MONTCLAIR, NJ July 12, 2011. The Ray Festa Melanoma Foundation launched Pro SunSmart™, an interactive training program designed to educate salon professionals on how to recognize the signs of melanoma and other skin cancers. People with scalp or neck melanomas die at nearly twice the rate of people with melanoma elsewhere on the body, including the face or ears, according to researchers at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Very few other professions get as “up close and personal” with clients as salon professionals do. As such, they are in the unique position to spot signs of change in their regular customers or notice unusual moles in new customers. Recently, stylists from salons across the state gathered at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in Basking Ridge for a one-hour training and information seminar. As part of their normal routine, stylists wash and cut hair revealing the areas at the base of the neck and behind the ears, part wet hair exposing the scalp, and visually examine faces during waxing or make-up application. Many already consider their hair stylists to be “lifesavers,” and now with the proper training, they can be truly instrumental in spotting a change that could save a life.

SAVING LIVES THROUGH AWARENESS

**551 Valley Road
Suite 136
Upper Montclair, NJ 07043**

**O. 973.744.3557
F. 973.302.8466
rayfesta.org**

The Ray Festa Melanoma Foundation is a registered 501(c)3 20-4126123

During the Pro SunSmart training session, salon professionals are taught the basics of melanoma and other skin cancers using the American Academy of Dermatology's **ABCDE** method of recognition of suspicious moles. Warning signs to look for in a mole are:

- Asymmetry – One half doesn't look like the other half
- Borders – Uneven, notched or fuzzy
- Color – More than one color or shade
- Diameter – Greater than ¼ of an inch
- Evolving—Changing over time

Participants in the seminar receive a mirror card that can be used to point out to the client the area of concern. And, equally important, since stylists often engage in conversation with their clients creating a level of trust and comfort, they are trained on how to approach the delicate subject of a change in skin with their clients. All participants are coached to encourage their clients to visit a Board-Certified dermatologist if an area of concern is identified. Certificates of attendance are awarded to those attending the Pro SunSmart training seminar, adding an extra layer of reassurance to clients that their stylists are indeed well-informed on the subject of skin cancer.

"The earlier a melanoma is found, the better," reports Dr. Elizabeth A. Quigley, dermatologist at Memorial Sloan-Kettering and Pro SunSmart medical advisor. "A melanoma that is in its earliest stage (in situ), before it has left the top layer of the skin (epidermis), is completely curable. Salon professionals can be instrumental in identifying early stage melanoma," she says. Salon professionals, armed with the right information, are empowered to save lives by taking steps to act as the first line of defense.

The development of Pro SunSmart marks the national expansion of the Ray Festa Melanoma Foundation's mission to educate everyone about early detection and prevention of melanoma. The Ray Festa Melanoma Foundation (www.rayfesta.org) is a non-profit organization dedicated to educating everyone on the importance of early detection and the prevention of melanoma. Founded in honor of Ray Festa, who was fatally stricken by melanoma at age 53, the foundation's primary focus is on melanoma awareness, education and outreach.

For additional information, interviews and press kits, contact Teri Festa at teri@rayfesta.org or 973.744.3557.

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About the Ray Festa Melanoma Foundation (www.rayfesta.org)

The mission of the Ray Festa Melanoma Foundation is to educate on the importance of early detection and the prevention of melanoma. As a youth-targeted organization, we strive to change behavior and make the act of applying sunscreen to become as commonplace as wearing a seatbelt. Much of this work is being done by aligning with sports leagues, teams and athletes. Ray Festa died of melanoma in 1992 at the young age of 53. He was diagnosed too late. His family took their unfortunate story and, along with others, formed the Foundation to both honor his memory and help save others from his regrettable fate. For additional information, interviews and press kits, contact Teri Festa at teri@rayfesta.org or 973.744.3557. Find us on Facebook and Twitter

About Melanoma

Melanoma is a malignant tumor of melanocytes which are found predominantly in skin but also in the bowel and the eye. Malignant melanoma is a serious type of skin cancer that causes the majority of skin cancer related deaths. It is due to uncontrolled growth of pigment cells, called melanocytes. Despite many years of intensive laboratory and clinical research, the sole effective cure is surgical resection of the primary tumor before it achieves a Breslow thickness greater than 1 mm.

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