



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 277

Resolution calling upon the New York State Legislature to adopt legislation that would require that all preparatory procedures necessary for laser hair removal be performed under the direct supervision of a physician properly trained and licensed in such hair removal procedure.

By Council Members Rivera, and Liu

Whereas, Laser hair removal has become a popular method of removing unwanted facial and body hair; and

Whereas, Laser hair removal works by using a process referred to as selective photothermolysis, whereby a beam of laser light is sent to a group of hair follicles that is capable of destroying the hair roots while leaving the surrounding skin unharmed; and

Whereas, Individuals who are considered qualified to perform laser hair removal varies state by state, and in New York State, such procedures may be performed by non-physician operators at spas, salons or clinics; and

Whereas, According to a 2002 member survey of the American Society for Dermatologic Surgery (the “ASDS”), dermatologic surgeons indicate that cosmetic procedures, including laser hair removal, present a public safety concern when performed by non-physicians without adequate training or supervision; and

Whereas, According to the survey, the incidence of complications from laser and other light-based hair removal practices by non-physicians rose significantly from 24% in 2001 to 31% in 2002, and 41% of surveyed members reported an increase in patients seeking corrective care after laser hair removal treatments performed by untrained non-physicians; and

Whereas, Complications from poorly supervised laser hair removal preparatory treatments can be fatal,

as in the case of Shiri Berg, a 22 year-old college student who died on January 10, 2005, after spending ten days in a coma as a result of using a cream containing Lidocaine and Tetracaine, which the spa that was to perform her laser hair removal told her to use in advance of the treatment in order to minimize any discomfort during the procedure; and

Whereas, Almost three years earlier, Blanca Bolanos went into convulsions in her car driving to a Tuscon, Arizona, laser hair removal clinic, and spent two years in a coma before dying, also as a result of using a cream containing Lidocaine and Tetracaine in anticipation of her laser hair removal treatment; and

Whereas, In recognition of the dangers of improperly supervised laser hair removal preparatory procedures, the New York State Legislature should adopt a law that requires that such treatments be provided only under the direct supervision of a physician; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the New York State Legislature to adopt legislation that would require that all preparatory procedures necessary for laser hair removal be performed under the direct supervision of a physician properly trained and licensed in such hair removal procedure.

Res. 1196/2005
JN