



TO: Assembly Committee on Transportation
FROM: Bob Rohloff, MD, Medical Director, Health Management & Community Services, Children's Wisconsin
DATE: Thursday, March 25, 2021
RE: Support for AB 131 to prohibit the sale and use of coal tar-based sealants and high PAH sealant products

Dear Chairman Plumer & Members of the Assembly Committee on Transportation:

On behalf of Children's Wisconsin (Children's), I share our support of AB 131 to prohibit the sale and use of coal tar-based sealants and high PAH sealant products. PAHs create a significant concern for children's health and well-being.

As you know, Children's is the state's only independent health care system dedicated solely to the health and well-being of children. We serve children and families in every county across the state, with inpatient hospitals in Milwaukee and the Fox Valley and more than 30 primary, specialty and urgent care clinics. We care for every part of a child's health, from critical care at one of our hospitals, to routine checkups in our primary care clinics. Children's focuses on all elements of pediatric well-being by providing dental care, school health nurses, foster care and adoption services, family resource centers, child health advocacy, health education, family preservation and support, mental health services, pediatric medical research and the statewide poison hotline.

Significant evidence from peer-reviewed studies shows that children living near parking lots which have been treated with pavement sealants containing high levels of PAHs have an excess lifetime cancer risk that is **14x higher** due to exposure to contaminated dust and soil than those living near unsealed parking lots. In addition to increasing the risk for cancer, exposure to PAHs has been found to impair cognitive development and cause birth defects.

When coal tar sealants break down and wear off over time, PAH-contaminated particles are dispersed throughout the outdoor environment by wind and storm water. Those particles are also tracked into homes on the soles of shoes. Due to this constant wearing away, pavement sealants need to be reapplied every few years. This creates a constant reintroduction of PAHs to the environment, where they accumulate in soil, waterbody sediment and house dust that can be incidentally ingested. Children, especially very young children who play on or near these driveways or parking lots, are particularly susceptible to the risk of PAH exposure from these sealants because they are more likely to ingest contaminated dust and soil.

At Children's, we care for the most vulnerable kids and it is our mission to keep them safe and healthy. The disturbing scientific and medical evidence tying PAHs to increased risks of birth defects, cognitive delays and cancer causes pediatric medical providers great concern.

We are pleased the State of Wisconsin is considering this policy and encourage you to follow the steps of local municipalities in adopting a statewide ban on high-PAH sealants to protect kids, regardless of where they live. This will serve as a tangible step to stop the use of a known and controllable substance that greatly increases the risk of cancer in children and damages children's health.

Sincerely,

Bob Rohloff, MD
Medical Director, Health Management & Community Services
Children's Wisconsin