STATEMENT ON THE NONCONTAGIOUS NATURE OF PSORIASIS

Psoriasis is a noncurable skin disorder that has been estimated to affect two to four percent of our nation’s population. The disorder produces recurrent skin lesions that may be limited to a few spots, such as in the scalp, or may involve 80-90 percent of the body surface. Although the skin surface may be unsightly, skin should not be regarded as an infection or an open wound.

Psoriasis, which tends to be inherited, is never contagious. The cause of psoriasis is unknown and there is no cure.

The skin lesions of psoriasis are in part a result of an excessive rapid growth and turnover of epidermal (skin) cells. In skin areas affected by psoriasis, cells race toward development four times faster than they should. Instead of maturing and being shed almost invisibly at the skin surface, the cells accumulate. They form silvery layers and flake off. The skin beneath is red and inflamed.

An individual with psoriasis poses no threat to the health and safety of others. There is no medical reason that a person with psoriasis should be denied the use of swimming pools, health clubs or dressing rooms. Since 1992, the Americans with Disabilities Act has prohibited discrimination in public accommodations such as restaurants, hotels, theaters, doctors’ offices, pharmacies, retail stores, museums, libraries, parks, private schools and daycare centers.

This statement and accompanying publications have been prepared for you by the National Psoriasis Foundation, a non-profit health advocacy organization. You are encouraged to contact the Psoriasis Foundation for further information.

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