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October 2, 2014

Madison Water Utility Board
Attn: President Madeline Gotkowitz

Dear Ms. Gotkowitz,

It has come to our attention that the Madison Water Utility Board will be reviewing their policy statement on community water fluoridation at the October 28th meeting. Fluoridation of community water supplies is considered one of the most significant public health advances of the 20th century and one of the safest, most cost-effective ways to increase overall oral health. Since its introduction over 65 years ago, fluoridation has dramatically improved the dental health of tens of millions of Americans.

Established in 1870, the Wisconsin Dental Association (WDA) is the state's largest organization representing dentistry. The WDA has over 3,000 members statewide who are committed to promoting professional excellence and quality oral health care. We ask you to please consider:

- Studies clearly demonstrate water fluoridation continues to be effective in reducing dental decay by 30-50% for children and adolescents (27% for adults), even in an era with widespread availability of fluoride from other sources. Community water fluoridation benefits everyone, especially those without access to regular dental care.

- Under the Safe Drinking Water Act, the Environmental Protection Agency has established drinking water standards for a number of substances, including fluoride, to protect the public's health. The Food and Drug Administration has also approved bottled water with optimal levels of fluoride for public consumption.

- Fluoride toothpaste alone is insufficient, hence why pediatricians and dentists alike prescribe fluoride tablets to children residing in non-fluoridated communities. Fluoride tablets can be a challenge as families don't always remember to continue taking them so the benefits are lost while the cost is still incurred. Studies have shown that communities that fluoridated water have a lower rate of tooth decay than non-fluoridated communities.

- The maximum reduction in tooth decay occurs when fluoride is available before the teeth erupt (systemically) and after teeth erupt (topically). Residents who receive the benefits of water fluoridation experience approximately 30+ percent less tooth decay.

- Every $1 invested in water fluoridation saves $38 in dental treatment costs for most cities.

On behalf of all the adults and children living in Madison, the WDA urges you to support the position statement of adding fluoride to the municipal water system.

Sincerely,

WISCONSIN DENTAL ASSOCIATION, INC

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WISCONSIN DENTAL ASSOCIATION

Community water fluoridation

For almost 70 years, community water fluoridation has proven to be a safe, effective and economical way to prevent tooth decay.

The Wisconsin Dental Association and its more than 3,000 member dentist and dental hygienists are committed to promoting quality oral health care and support this public health achievement.

Quick facts:

- Tooth decay remains a significant public health problem in Wisconsin with an estimated 53 percent of third-graders having had cavities, according to the state Department of Health Services.
- National health care statistics show oral disease causes children to miss 51-54 million school hours and adults to lose 164 million work hours each year.
- Community water fluoridation is adjusting a naturally occurring mineral in public water systems to an optimal level for oral health benefits.
- Regardless of age, income or education, optimally fluoridated water benefits whole communities by strengthening tooth enamel and preventing tooth decay.
- Approximately 90 percent of the population in Wisconsin on public water supplies has access to the benefits of optimal levels of fluoride.

Safe

- Adding fluoride to drinking water is like adding vitamin D to milk, iodine to table salt and folic acid to breads and cereals.
- Scientific research has found that most causes of fluorosis (white spots on tooth surfaces) is caused by misuse of fluoridated toothpaste.
- New recommendation of the optimal level of fluoride in public water systems of 0.7 ppm recognizes that federal and state health officials are reviewing research and relying on the best science available.

Effective

- Drinking fluoridated water reduces tooth decay over a lifetime by a minimum 25 percent, even in an era with widespread availability of fluoride from other sources, such as fluoride toothpaste and in office treatments.
- Fluoride helps to rematerialize tooth surfaces and prevents cavities from continuing to form.
- With older Americans keeping their teeth longer, fluoride continues to be important for preventing tooth decay among seniors. Older Americans are especially susceptible to tooth decay, because of exposed root surfaces and mouth dryness.

Economical

- Every $1 invested in community water fluoridation results in $38 saved in dental treatment costs for most cities.
- The average cost for a community to fluoridate its water is estimated to range from approximately 50 cents a year per person in large communities to approximately $3 a year per person in small communities.
- An individual can have a lifetime of fluoridated water for less than the cost of one dental filling.

FLUORIDE FACTS

1946

First city in Wisconsin (Sheboygan) starts fluoridating water to optimal level for public health

90

Percent of Wisconsin residents on community water supplies who are receiving fluoridated water's benefits

125

Number of reputable international health and science organizations that recognize fluoride's public health benefits

$3,800

Amount of dental care costs saved for every $100 invested in community water fluoridation

25%

Minimum amount of tooth decay prevented during a lifetime thanks to fluoridated water

69

Years of research and experience confirm fluoridation is safe for people and the environment

2009 FDA APPROVED

FDA approves bottle labeling that states fluoridated water may reduce risk of dental cavities or tooth decay

Learn more at
WDA.org/your-oral-health/fluoride

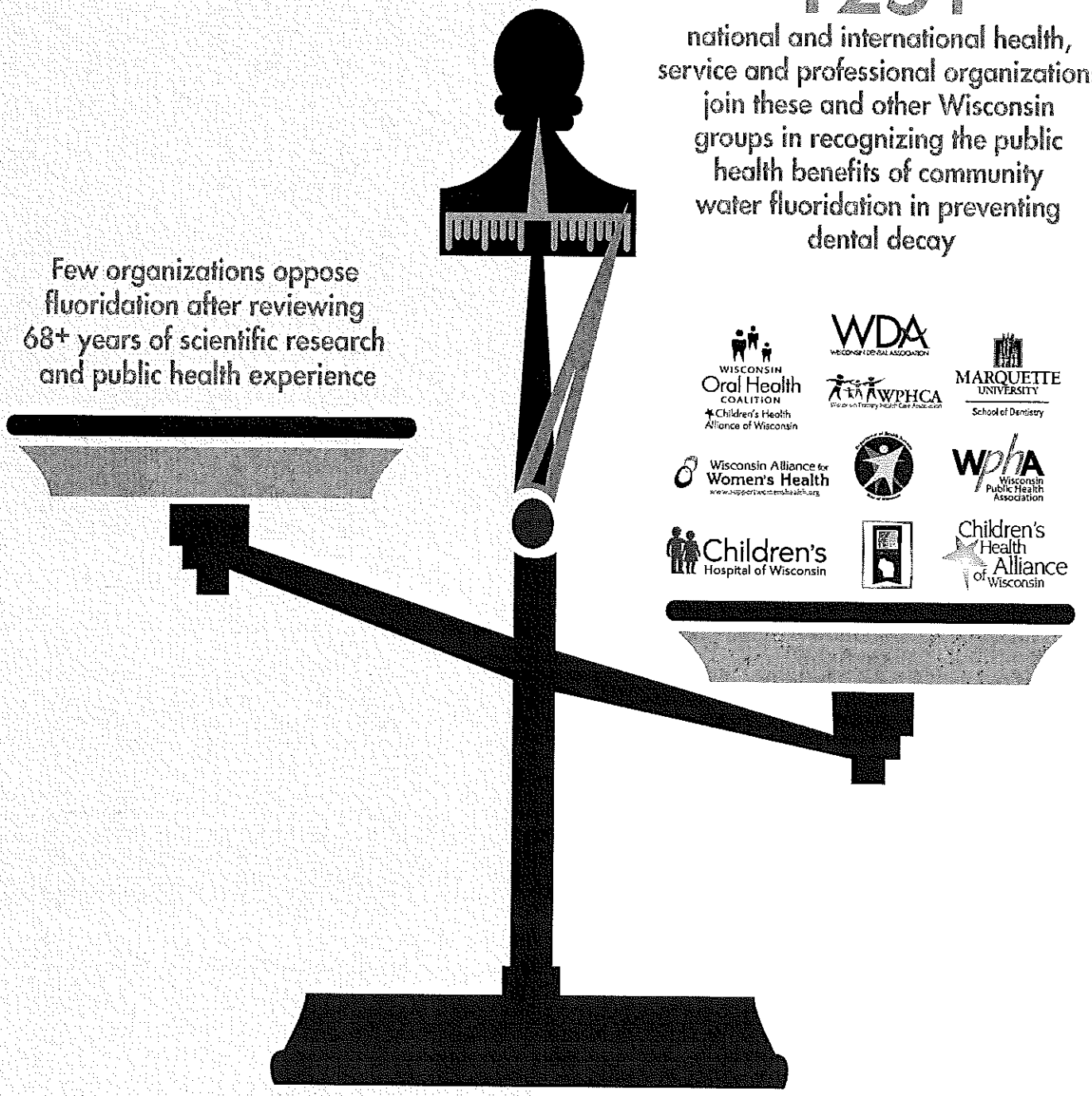
WDA
WISCONSIN DENTAL ASSOCIATION

WEIGHING SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITY WATER FLUORIDATION IN WISCONSIN

125+

national and international health, service and professional organizations join these and other Wisconsin groups in recognizing the public health benefits of community water fluoridation in preventing dental decay

Few organizations oppose fluoridation after reviewing 68+ years of scientific research and public health experience



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