WISCONSIN
Oral Health
COALITION
Children's Health
Alliance of Wisconsin

Testimony presented to the Madison Water Utility Board on October 28, 2014

You may not know this, but millions of families have been fighting tooth decay for decades, simply by turning on the tap. In fact, many of you can probably think of one or more senior citizens that have most of their natural teeth? Like many of you, I can think of elderly relatives and friends who are living well into adulthood with their natural teeth. But, this was not always the case. This is in part because of community water fluoridation programs, like the one here in Madison.

My name is Alyssa Ricketts and I am the Wisconsin Oral Health Coalition coordinator for Children's Health Alliance of Wisconsin. I also serve as the Southeastern regional community water fluoridation specialist. In our brief time together, I will share 1) the oral health benefits of community water fluoridation and 2) water fluoridation's safety and effectiveness.

Community water fluoridation provides the most effective and inexpensive method for preventing cavities. Fluoride is a mineral that exists naturally in all water supplies. As a matter of fact, most drinking waters naturally contain fluoride. And when adjusted to a certain level, fluoride can help stop and reduce the development of tooth decay by remineralizing the tooth enamel.

Community water fluoridation is nothing new. It is a health strategy we have successfully used for nearly 70 years in the United States to reduce the pain and cost of tooth decay. However, an abundance of misinformation on fluoridation has been circulated. Opponents blame fluoride for a number of health conditions, but their claims simply do not stand up to the evidence.

With more than 65 years of research and practical experience, the best available science indicates that fluoridation of community water supplies is safe. The strong evidence behind fluoridation is why it is endorsed by leading health and medical organizations, such as the Centers for Disease Control, the American Dental Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Institute of Medicine.

If there are three things I want you to take away it would be:

1. Fluoride naturally occurs in all water sources
2. It is safe and effective
3. It is endorsed by leading national and state health organizations

In light of these facts, ensure Madison residents live well into adulthood with their natural teeth by safeguarding your community water fluoridation program.

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