October 14, 2014

Tom Heikkinen
General Manager
Madison Water Utility Board
119 E. Olin Avenue
Madison, Wisconsin 53713

Dear Mr. Heikkinen:

The American Association for Community Dental Programs (AACDP) is a national organization that supports the efforts of those serving the oral health needs of vulnerable populations at high risk for oral disease. Members include staff of city, county and community-based health programs with an interest in oral health issues and access to care. Below we've highlighted key information that we are certain you will find valuable when considering community water fluoridation (CWF).

Extensive peer-reviewed, credible scientific evidence acquired over decades of research demonstrates that CWF is a safe and effective community-based method of preventing dental caries (tooth decay) or minimizing its severity in people of all ages, regardless of socioeconomic status.[1] Evidence also shows that the prevalence of tooth decay is high in communities where fluoride levels in the community water supply are not optimally adjusted. But many communities have not successfully initiated or maintained CWF.[1–3] In spite of extensive evidence supporting the efficacy of CWF[1] aggressive media campaigns by a vocal minority opposing CWF result in too many communities failing to benefit from this important public health measure.

Today, tooth decay is the most common chronic childhood disease—affecting more than half of the nation's children—and every year children miss millions of hours of classroom time because they suffer from pain associated with oral disease. AACDP members see the consequences of this disease every day in the families that we serve. In addition, research shows that increasing numbers of adults are retaining more teeth for longer and, therefore, risk experiencing tooth decay throughout their lives. Thus not only children but also adults benefit substantially from CWF.

Finally, CWF is a significant cost-containment measure. For every $1 invested in CWF, individuals and government insurance programs, including Medicaid, save approximately $38 in preventable dental treatment is saved.[4]

In conclusion, CWF is a safe, cost-effective public health measure that protects and promotes oral health—and therefore overall health—throughout the lifespan, regardless of an individual's age, income level, or degree of educational attainment. CWF is supported by numerous experts in dentistry, medicine, and public health.

On behalf of AACDP, thank you for taking the time to read our thoughts on CWF, a strong public health measure about which we feel strongly.

Sincerely,

Nancy Rublee, R.D.H., CDHC
President
American Association for Community Dental Programs
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Cc: Robbyn Kuester

References

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