American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™

Wisconsin Chapter

Wisconsin Chapter AAP
563 Carter Court
Suite B
Kimberly, WI 54136
Phone: 262/490-9075
E-mail: KLaBracke@wiaap.org

Executive Committee

President
Jeffrey W. Britton, MD, FAAP
2414 Kohler Memorial Drive
Sheboygan, WI 53081-3129
Phone: 902/457-4461
Email: Jeffrey.w.britton@aurora.org

Vice President
Mala Mathur, MD, MPH, FAAP
1321 Redan Drive
Verona, WI 53593-7820
Phone: 608/497-0441
Email: MMathur@charter.net

Secretary/Treasurer
Dipesh Navsaria, MD, MSLIS, MPH, FAAP
University of Wisconsin School of Public Health and Medicine
226 South Owen Drive
Madison, WI 53705-5067
Phone: 608/262-7180
Email: dipesh@navsaria.com

Immediate Past President
James A. Meyer, MD, FAAP
Department of Pediatrics
Marshfield Clinic, Adolescent Section
1000 North Oak Avenue
Marshfield, WI 54449
Phone: 715/387-5240
E-mail: meyer.james@marshfieldclinic.org

Chapter Executive Director
Kia K. LaBracke
563 Carter Court
Suite B
Kimberly, WI 54136
Phone: 262/490-9075
E-mail: KLaBracke@wiaap.org

Chapter Web site
www.wiaap.org

AAP Headquarters
141 Northwest Point Blvd
Elk Grove Village, IL 60007-1098
Phone: 847/434-4000
Fax: 847/434-8000
E-mail: kidsdocs@aap.org
Web: www.aap.org

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Madison Water Utility Board Meeting

The Wisconsin Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics would like to submit this statement in support for community water fluoridation.

The Wisconsin chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (WI-AAP) supports community water fluoridation as a cost-effective means of preventing tooth decay throughout the lifespan and joins with other major medical and health organizations in advocating for this common sense public health policy. Fluoridation of water has been proclaimed by the the Center for Disease Control as one of the ten greatest public health achievements of the 20th century.

Tooth decay is preventable, yet it is the most common chronic childhood disease, about five times more common than asthma. All too often, it leads to countless missed hours from school and work, needless pain and suffering, and costly visits to the emergency room.

Water fluoridation prevents tooth decay mainly by providing teeth with frequent contact of low levels of fluoride throughout each day throughout the lifespan. Water fluoridation reduces tooth decay by about 25 percent over a person's lifetime. The constant contact of low concentrations of fluoride on teeth that occurs when people drink fluoridated water has been shown through studies to significantly reduce dental cavities.

Community water fluoridation is not only safe and effective but it is also cost-saving and the least expensive way to deliver the benefits of fluoride to all residents of a community. For larger communities of more than 20,000 people, it costs about 50 cents per person annually to fluoridate the water. Every $1 invested in this preventive measure yields approximately $38 savings in dental treatment costs. Adding fluoride to the public water supply is the most cost-effective means of preventing dental decay.

Currently, more than 204 million people in the United States are served by public water supplies containing enough fluoride to protect teeth. The widespread availability of fluoride through water fluoridation, toothpaste, and other sources, has resulted in the steady decline of dental cavities throughout the United States.

Dental health has steadily improved in Wisconsin, but many children still experience decay. The most recent data show that 53% of Wisconsin third-graders have experienced tooth decay. Roughly 2,000 third-graders have toothaches or dental infections severe enough to require urgent care in hospitals or other facilities.

We strongly support community water fluoridation because it is safe and effective and backed by a solid base of scientific evidence and over 70 years of practice. The WI-AAP strongly supports the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) position to endorse fluoridation of community water supplies as safe and effective for preventing tooth decay and as a way to keep Wisconsin children healthy.

We invite you to visit Children's Oral Health web site http://www2.aap.org/commpeds/dochs/oralhealth/index.html and The Campaign for Dental Health http://www.ilikemyteeth.org/ for additional information.