American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™

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October 7, 2014

Tom Heikkinen
General Manager
Madison Water Utility Board
119 East Olin Avenue
Madison, WI 53713

Dear Mr. Heikkinen,

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) is a professional organization of 60,000 primary care pediatricians, pediatric medical sub-specialists, and pediatric surgical sub-specialists dedicated to the health, safety, and well-being of infants, children, adolescents, and young adults. The AAP echoes the recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the American Dental Association (ADA) in stating that community water fluoridation is safe, effective, and protective of unnecessary dental disease, a costly and painful condition.

The AAP is particularly concerned with the rising rates of early childhood caries (tooth decay) in the United States and the detrimental effects this disease can have on children. Dental caries, although largely preventable, is the most common chronic childhood disease, 5 times more common than asthma. Dental caries can lead to severe health problems, including serious infection, debilitating pain, dietary and speech problems, and in rare cases, even death. Therefore, the AAP supports community water fluoridation as a way to help protect children's teeth. Several AAP policies and guidelines speak to the benefit of community water fluoridation. For example:

- Regular and frequent exposure to small amounts of fluoride is the best way to protect the teeth against caries. This exposure can be readily accomplished through drinking water that has been optimally fluoridated and brushing with fluoride toothpaste twice daily. [1]
- The delivery of fluoride includes community-based, professionally applied, and self-administered modalities. Water fluoridation is a community-based intervention that optimizes the level of fluoride in drinking water, resulting in preeruptive and posteruptive protection of the teeth. Water fluoridation is a cost-effective means of preventing dental caries, with the lifetime cost per person equaling less than the cost of 1 dental restoration. In short, fluoridated water is the cheapest and most effective way to deliver anticaries benefits to communities.[2]
- Water fluoridation is seen as effective and inexpensive, does not require daily adherence, and promotes equity, because it benefits everyone regardless of socioeconomic status.[3]

The AAP continues its mission to ensure the health and well-being of all children, and, to this end, supports local and state efforts to ensure children have access to safe, optimally fluoridated water. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this statement. If you require more information, please email the AAP at oralhealth@aap.org.

Sincerely,

James M Perrin, MD, FAAP
President

JMP/lb

[1] Bright Futures Guidelines for the Health Supervision of Infants, Children, and Adolescents, 3rd Edition. 2008.
[2] Preventive Oral Health Intervention for Pediatricians. *Pediatrics*. 2008;122:1387–1394.
[3] Early Childhood Caries in Indigenous Communities. *Pediatrics*. 2011;127(6):1190-1198.