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Subject: A sincere thanks from the WOHC

Community water fluoridation prevails in Rice Lake

On May 12 there was a special meeting of the Rice Lake Utilities Commission (Barron County) to hear testimony on whether to continue fluoridating the city's public water supply. The Commission will recommend to the Rice Lake City Council to continue fluoridating. Moreover, the commission will recommend waiting 10 years before reviewing the city's fluoridation policy. We are pleased by the Commission's recommendation and the instrumental role played by the WOHC's regional community water fluoridation specialist program. The WOHC will continue to educate the Rice Lake City Council and watch for any actions taken by the council once they receive the recommendations. For those who assisted in raising awareness in Rice Lake, thank you for your hard work and dedication to safeguarding community water fluoridation in Wisconsin.

Best,

Alyssa Ricketts

Register for the 2016 Wisconsin Oral Health Coalition regional meetings

Alyssa Ricketts, JD I Wisconsin Oral Health Coalition Project Manager I
414.337.4575

Children's Health Alliance of Wisconsin I Wisconsin's voice for children's health

www.chawisconsin.org I watch our 20-year video



Rice Lake Water Utility Commission
320 W. Coleman Street
Rice Lake, WI 54868
May 6, 2016

Members of the Utility Commission:

It is my understanding that the issue of community water fluoridation (CWF) will be discussed at an upcoming meeting of your commission. As a pediatric dentist with over 30 years of experience in improving the dental health of our children, and as President of the American Fluoridation Society (AFS) a volunteer organization composed of healthcare professionals dedicated to the prevention of dental disease in all of our residents, I offer my strong personal support and that of the AFS, in favor of continuance of this very valuable public health initiative for the residents of your community.

The problems with untreated dental decay in all areas of our nation are significant and well documented. Research has linked oral health problems with diabetes, stroke and other serious medical conditions. Dental problems have exorbitant costs to society through Medicaid and other insurance programs. Untreated dental decay results in absenteeism and loss of productivity in the workplace and in schools. Last year, the National Collaborative on Education and Health identified dental problems as one of the seven leading reasons why children miss school. Given the consequences of poor dental health, a community that ceases fluoridation would expose its residents to an even greater risk of tooth decay.

Prevention is the best "cure" for any disease. With its inexpensive cost and ability to reach all members of a community, there is no dental decay preventive measure which even nears the cost-effectiveness of water fluoridation in the prevention of a significant amount of dental decay in entire populations. The scientific evidence of the safety and effectiveness of this initiative are voluminous, while the arguments against it are without merit. Attached please find a document of the AFS which provides many of the pertinent facts and evidence of which I hope that the members of your commission consider during its discussions on CWF.

Water fluoridation is an initiative which has provided clearly documented benefit to hundreds of millions of our residents over the past 71 years, with no proven adverse effects. With cost savings of \$15-\$50 or more per each \$1 spent on fluoridation, providing this type of health benefit to the citizens of your community, as it has been for decades, is an enormous service, with no net cost. If I can be of any assistance in providing further information, or in any other manner, please do not hesitate to contact me for immediate response.

Thank you for your diligent consideration of this issue, and your desire to continually act in the best interests of your community.

Sincerely:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Johnny Johnson, Jr.", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Johnny Johnson, Jr., DMD, MS, President American Fluoridation Society

P.S. – Please find our attached “9 Key Facts” document. We appreciate your time.

9 Key Facts You Should Know About Community Water Fluoridation

1. Fluoride is nature's way to fight tooth decay. Fluoride is a mineral that exists naturally in public water supplies, but usually at a level that is too low to protect teeth from cavities. This is why [most local water systems](#) adjust the level, usually by adding a little more fluoride. Fluoride's benefits were first [confirmed](#) during the early 1900s in Colorado Springs, Colorado—an area whose water supply has unusually high levels of fluoride.

2. More than 70 years of research and experience proves that fluoridation lowers the rate of tooth decay for both children and adults. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, fluoridation [reduces](#) tooth decay by approximately 25% over a lifetime. Both [children](#) and [adults](#) benefit. Research shows that fluoridated water works in two ways. It works when [swallowed](#) because the fluoride enters the bloodstream and gets incorporated into developing teeth. It works [topically](#) because trace levels of fluoride enter the mouth and are incorporated in saliva and plaque that coat the enamel of teeth.



3. Fluoridation provides important additional protection beyond fluoride toothpaste. [Research](#) conducted since the 1980s—after fluoride toothpaste was widely used—continues to show that fluoridated communities have lower rates of tooth decay. Like seatbelts and air bags, fluoride toothpaste and fluoridated water are complementary practices.

4. Fluoridation's benefits are reinforced by recent studies. The U.S. Community Preventive Services Task Force, an independent panel of experts, reviewed more than 150 studies about fluoride and issued its [finding](#) in 2013 that there is “strong evidence” of fluoridation's effectiveness. Roughly 30 of these studies had been published since 2000. Within the past several years, published research from [Canada](#), [England](#), [Ireland](#), [Israel](#) and [New Zealand](#) reinforce the overwhelming evidence that fluoridation keeps children and adults healthy.

5. Fluoridation reflects America's tradition of fortifying foods and beverages to protect human health. For example, [Vitamin D](#) is added to milk, [iodine](#) is added to salt, and [folic acid](#) is added to breads and cereals. We all have a stake in keeping our communities healthy, and one example is educational achievement is one reason. Experts [have identified](#) dental health issues as one of the leading reasons why children miss school.

6. Solid research confirms the safety of fluoridated water. The National Research Council has produced [5 reports](#) on fluoride or fluoridation, including three since 1997. None of these reports has identified health concerns about the level of fluoride used for water fluoridation. Studies circulated by anti-fluoride groups typically tested fluoride levels in other countries that are far higher than those used here in the U.S. The Toxicology Excellence for

Risk Assessment, an independent research organization, [explains](#) that “medical scientists have agreed that small concentrations of fluoride have health benefits that vastly exceed any hypothetical health risk.” In a [2014 report](#), Public Health England examined safety concerns and wrote that its analysis “provides further reassurance that water fluoridation is a safe and effective public health measure.”

7. Anti-fluoride groups circulate various claims that are false, unproven or misleading. Dental and medical professionals aren’t the only ones who have determined that opponents make a lot of false or misleading claims. PolitiFact, an independent fact-checking service, has investigated [three typical arguments](#) made by opponents of fluoridation. Each of these claims was shown to be false or deceptive. Vermont’s former Commissioner of Environmental Conservation [reported](#) that anti-fluoride activists have seriously misrepresented the safety” of fluoridated water “even though they have been provided with the facts.” An expert in water research publicly [expressed](#) concerns about “the inflammatory and misleading rhetoric” that some fluoridation opponents use.

8. A community that ended fluoridation would undermine the health and quality of life of its residents. The city council in Calgary—Canada’s 3rd-largest city—ended fluoridation in 2011, and a [recently published study](#) shows the consequences this decision is having. Tooth decay among Calgary’s 2nd-grade children (measured by tooth surfaces) soared 146% after the city ceased fluoridation. Tooth decay among Calgary children is rising at an 81% faster pace than the decay rate in a similar city that is fluoridated. And a higher cavity rate means that U.S. families and Medicaid budgets must pay more for fillings and other dental treatments. Research shows that children with poor dental health are nearly [three times](#) more likely to miss school days. Adults with unhealthy or missing teeth are at a [disadvantage](#) when interviewing for good jobs.



9. A community that ended fluoridation would increase health inequities. Children of color and those from low-income families experience [disparities](#) in oral health. Ending fluoridation would make these disparities even worse. We know this because research from [Louisiana, Canada](#) and [other nations](#) demonstrates that low-income or disadvantaged children in non-fluoridated communities experience more tooth decay. In fact, a University of Michigan researcher [called](#) fluoridation “the most effective and practical method” for reducing income-based disparities. A 2013 report by the Wellesley Institute [concluded](#) that ending fluoridation in a community “will be especially damaging for already health-disadvantaged populations and will worsen oral health inequities.” The institute added: “Alternate oral health measures will not be as effective and will be much more expensive.”