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May 31, 2018

To: Warden Tom Bain and Essex County Council Members

Re: June 6, 2018 –Council Meeting: Agenda Item- Presentation of the Windsor Essex County Health Unit

### **2018 Oral Health Report and Recommendations**

The CommUnity Partnership (CUP) mission is to revitalize neighbourhoods, build resilience, and create healthy and supportive communities through effective community partnerships. CUP is dedicated to: civic engagement, partnership, learning, empowerment, and stewardship and are currently located in 5 city and 1 county site. Working in collaboration with neighbourhood residents, and municipal supports, CUP addresses challenges of residents and their families who experience issues related to both a personal depth of poverty and poverty of opportunity.

CUP's focus is to reduce the negative impact of poverty and recognizing how poverty removes opportunities across all domains. Of particular note is the poverty of opportunity to access physical and mental health services, including effective dental care. Due to a variety of complex issues related to poverty, many families find themselves unable to provide the essentials of good dental health. Poor oral health can have a devastating and compounding effect on children, impacting their ability to eat, creating pain that limits attention and/or attendance at school, reducing their self-esteem and confidence. Although some may feel these are inconsequential, the outcome can have lifelong negative affects which impact employability and quality of life.

However, one easy and effective support that can be given to all children and their families is community water fluoridation. As outlined in the Oral Health Report 2018 (Windsor Essex County Health Unit) the positive effects of fluoridation can have a profound effect on dental health, particularly in children and serves to narrow the gap in dental healthcare access. Additionally, the County of Essex has supported the Healthy Kids Community Challenge which identified that "Water Does Wonders". It was the second theme of the Health Kids Community Challenge encouraging kids and families to reach for water when thirsty instead of sugar-sweetened beverages. It's the natural, healthy and free choice". (<https://www.citywindsor.ca/residents/socialservices-/Social-Services-Overview/healthy-kids-community-challenge/>)

Fluoridated water can also have a powerful, long-term effect for creating healthier children and reduce one more negative consequence of poverty. We support the recommendation of fluoridation to all Essex County municipalities' community water.

Respectfully,

*Cheryl Taggart*

Cheryl Taggart, MSW RSW

CommUnity Partnership | Director

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