

June 1, 2018

County of Essex Council
Essex County Civic Centre
360 Fairview Avenue West
Essex, ON N8M 1Y6

RE: Community Water Fluoridation

To the County of Essex Council:

As the voluntary professional organization which represents the dentists of Ontario, promotes the highest standards of dental care and advocates for accessible and sustainable optimal oral health, the Ontario Dental Association (ODA) fully supports efforts to ensure that municipal drinking water supplies are optimally fluoridated.

The safety and effectiveness of community water fluoridation (CWF) is based on sound and compelling scientific studies and is widely supported by researchers and experts in the oral health and health community. The ODA – *along with other stakeholders in the dental care community* – believes that optimally fluoridated water ensures the oral health, and therefore the overall health, of all Ontarians no matter what their age, socioeconomic background, or geographic location¹. Economic disparity should not act as a barrier to optimal oral health, and access to optimally fluoridated water is an important way to ensure fairness. CWF is widely regarded as a successful public health measure that benefits people of all ages and backgrounds, reaching large numbers of people where they live, learn, work, and play².

Indeed, other health professional associations, including the Ontario Medical Association (OMA)³ and the Peel Chapter of the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO)⁴, have publicly voiced their support for CWF. CWF is also supported internationally, as the British Medical Association has publicly committed to the fluoridation of water supplies^{5,6}. In Ontario, CWF has received widespread support, including from former Ministers of Health and Long-Term Care, and both former and current Medical Officers of Health across the province. Health professionals widely agree that CWF benefits everyone, especially those without access to regular dental care².

The consensus of the scientific community is that CWF, at the level recommended to prevent tooth decay, safely provides oral health benefits which in turn supports improved general health². In a systematic review of CWF studies, Cochrane (a world-renowned scientific research review organization), concluded that CWF is effective at reducing levels of tooth decay among children⁷. Further, the cost of prevention is far less than of treatment. For every dollar spent fluoridating the community water supply, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that 38 dollars will be saved in dental costs⁸.

There is no doubt that CWF is a fiscally responsible, safe, and effective means to prevent tooth decay. For the benefit of all your constituents, we encourage you to continue to listen to the evidence-based advice of the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit (WECHU), and other scientific and medical experts regarding the safety, importance, and effectiveness of CWF⁹.

Sincerely,



Dr. David M. Stevenson
Chair, Board of Directors and President

c Dr. Wajid Ahmed, Acting Medical Officer of Health, Windsor-Essex County Health Unit

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- ¹ McLaren, L., Emery Herbert, J.C. 2012. *Drinking Water Fluoridation and Oral Health Inequities in Canadian Children*. Canadian Journal of Public Health. Available at: <http://journal.cpha.ca/index.php/cjph/article/viewFile/2974/2636>.
- ² American Dental Association. 2018. *Fluoridation Facts*. Practical Guide Series.
- ³ Ontario Medical Association. 2010. *Water Fluoridation*. Available at: <https://www.oma.org/HealthPromotion/Pages/Fluoridation.aspx>.
- ⁴ Brampton Guardian. 2016. *Nurses Support Water Fluoridation*. Available at: <http://www.bramptonguardian.com/opinion-story/6274582-nurses-support-water-fluoridation/>.
- ⁵ British Medical Association. 2009. *Fluoridation of Water*. Available at: http://bmaopac.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/exlibris/aleph/a21_1/apache_media/VMYPT7FHYYI9TMH8V36U7PBQULMHQ9.pdf.
- ⁶ British Medical Association. 2014. *No evidence of fluoridation health risks, says report*. Available at: <http://www.bma.org.uk/news-views-analysis/news/2014/march/no-evidence-of-fluoridation-health-risks-says-report>.
- ⁷ Iheozor-Ejiofor Z, Worthington HV, Walsh T, O'Malley L, Clarkson JE, Macey R, Alam R, Tugwell P, Welch V, Glenny A. *Water Fluoridation for the Prevention of Dental Caries*. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2015, Issue 6. Available at: http://www.cochrane.org/CD010856/ORAL_water-fluoridation-prevent-tooth-decay.
- ⁸ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2013. *Cost Savings of Community Water Fluoridation*. Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/fluoridation/factsheets/cost.htm>.
- ⁹ Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health. 2012. *Oral Health – More Than Just Cavities*. Available at: http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/common/ministry/publications/reports/oral_health/oral_health.aspx.