



ALPHA Resolution 2014-2

Reaffirming Support for Community Water Fluoridation to Improve Oral Health

WHEREAS, dental tooth decay is recognized as a chronic disease, and the most common chronic disease found in childrenⁱ; and

WHEREAS, 28 percent of children aged 2-5 are affected by tooth decay while six out of ten adolescents (12-19 years) and over 90 percent of adults (20-64 years) experience dental cariesⁱⁱ;

WHEREAS, the prevalence and severity of dental caries has decreased significantly in the U.S. as a result of community water fluoridation and the nearly ubiquitous use of fluoride toothpasteⁱⁱⁱ;

WHEREAS, public opinion polls have consistently shown 70 percent or more of the adult U.S. population supports fluoridation^{iv};

WHEREAS, Fluoridation of community water supplies is simply the precise adjustment of the existing naturally occurring fluoride levels in drinking water to an optimal fluoride level recommended by the U.S. Public Health Service (0.7 -1.2 parts per million) for the prevention of dental decay^v; and

WHEREAS, the average cost for a community to fluoridate its water is estimated to range from approximately \$0.50 a year per person in large communities to approximately \$3.00 a year per person in small communities. For most cities, every \$1 invested in water fluoridation saves \$38 in dental treatment costs^{vi}

WHEREAS, the lifetime average cost per person represents less than one-third of the charge for one dental restoration; and

WHEREAS, fluoridation of community water supplies is supported by over 90 professional health organizations including the American Public Health Association^{vii}; and

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has named water fluoridation as one of the ten greatest public health achievements during the 20th century^{viii}, ALPHA has been on record of supporting community water fluoridation in a past resolution, and 2010 marks the 65th anniversary of water fluoridation in the United States; and

WHEREAS, community water fluoridation is a public health measure that benefits individuals of all ages and socioeconomic groups, especially those without access to regular dental care; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alaska Public Health Association reaffirms the association's recognition of the public health benefits of community water



fluoridation for preventing dental decay, and encourages Alaska communities to fluoridate water supplies to levels optimal to prevent tooth decay and promote optimal oral health.

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alaska Public Health Association submit a letter defining the organization's position on community water fluoridation to and future community and/or legislative forums discussing the merits of water fluoridation in Alaska.

Fiscal Impact on ALPHA: This action will result in minor costs associated with sending this resolution and accompanying cover letter to the Governor and key political leaders.

Public Health Impact: Improving access to fluoridated water helps to reduce health disparities and prevent dental decay.

ⁱ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, "Oral Health in America: A Report of the Surgeon General, October 2000. <http://profiles.nlm.nih.gov/ps/access/NNBBJT.pdf>

ⁱⁱ Dye BA, Tan S, Smith V, Lewis BG, Barker LK, Thornton-Evans G, Eke PI, Beltran-Aguilar ED, Horowitz AM, Li CH. "Trends in oral health status: United States, 1988-1994 and 1999-2004. *Vital Health Stat 11*. 2007 Apr;(248):1-92. http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/series/sr_11/sr11_248.pdf.

ⁱⁱⁱ Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Task Force on Community Preventative Services. "Promoting oral health: interventions for preventing dental caries, oral and pharyngeal cancers, and sports-related craniofacial injuries," *MMWR Recom Rep*. 2001 Nov 30;50(RR-21):1-13. <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5021a1.htm>

^{iv} American Dental Association, "Fluoridation Facts," 2005. http://www.ada.org/sections/newsAndEvents/pdfs/fluoridation_facts.pdf

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^{vi} American Dental Association, "Fluoridation Facts," 2005. http://www.ada.org/sections/newsAndEvents/pdfs/fluoridation_facts.pdf

^{vii} American Public Health Association, "Community Water Fluoridation in the United States", 2008. <http://www.apha.org/advocacy/policy/policysearch/default.htm?id=1373>

^{viii} USDHSS, Center for Disease Control and Prevention, "Achievements in Public Health, 1990-1999: Fluoridation of Drinking Water to Prevent Dental Caries", *MMWR*, 48(41), pp. 933-940, October 22, 1999. <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm4841a1.htm>