

alPHa's members are
the public health units
in Ontario.

alPHa Sections:

Boards of Health
Section

Council of Ontario
Medical Officers of
Health (COMOH)

**Affiliate
Organizations:**

Association of Ontario
Public Health Business
Administrators

Association of
Public Health
Epidemiologists
in Ontario

Association of
Supervisors of Public
Health Inspectors of
Ontario

Health Promotion
Ontario

Ontario Association of
Public Health Dentistry

Ontario Association of
Public Health Nursing
Leaders

Ontario Dietitians in
Public Health

May 4, 2018

Valerie Critchley
City Clerk
350 City Hall Square West, Room 203
Windsor, Ontario N9A 6S1
Canada

Re: Support for Community Water Fluoridation

On behalf of the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHa) and its member Medical Officers of Health, Boards of Health and Affiliate organizations, I am writing today to express our full support for the Windsor-Essex County Board of Health's recommendations for improving oral health, particularly for the re-introduction of community water fluoridation in Windsor as a key prevention strategy for dental caries.

The relationship among poor oral health, poor overall health, developmental issues and social risks is very well established. It has also been clearly demonstrated that the greater burden of poor oral health is in marginalized populations, which are also less likely to be able to afford the out-of-pocket expense of most preventive and restorative oral health services in Ontario. We know that there is a marked decline in the rates of tooth decay where fluoride has been added to municipal water supplies, the benefits of which are realized without regard to age, education, socio-economic status or access to other preventive measures.

More information is included in the attached materials, which include alPHa Resolution A14-4 - *A Provincial Approach to Community Water Fluoridation* and related correspondence that includes a 2016 letter to all municipal councils from the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care and the Chief Medical Officer of Health in support of community water fluoridation.

Yours sincerely,



Carmen McGregor,
alPHa President

COPY: Dr. David Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health
Dr. Wajid Ahmed, Medical Officer of Health, Windsor-Essex County Health Unit
Kimberly Casier, Manager, Oral Health, Windsor-Essex County Health Unit

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Section

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Medical Officers of
Health (COMOH)

Affiliate

Organizations:

ANDSOOHA - Public
Health Nursing
Management

Association of Ontario
Public Health Business
Administrators

Association of
Public Health
Epidemiologists
in Ontario

Association of
Supervisors of Public
Health Inspectors of
Ontario

Health Promotion
Ontario

Ontario Association of
Public Health Dentistry

Ontario Society of
Nutrition Professionals
in Public Health

15/01/2016

Hon. Eric Hoskins
Minister of Health and Long-Term
Care
10th Floor, Hepburn Block
80 Grosvenor Street
Toronto, Ontario M7A 2C4

Dr. David Williams
Chief Medical Officer of Health (A)
21st Floor,
393 University Avenue Toronto,
Ontario M5G 2M2

Dear Minister Hoskins & Dr. Williams,

Re: Support for Fluoridation of Community Water Supplies

On behalf of member Medical Officers of Health, Boards of Health and Affiliate organizations of the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHa), I am writing today to thank you for your January 7 2016 letter to Ontario's municipal councils in support of fluoridation of community water systems.

As you know, our position is that the practice of fluoridation of municipal drinking water supplies should be maintained or implemented wherever possible. Fluoridation of community water supplies is a low-cost and equitable means to provide increased protection from tooth decay on a population level.

As you note, tooth decay is a significant but preventable chronic disease with far reaching impacts on overall health, and we are grateful that you have made such a strong and clear statement about the effectiveness of fluoridated water in reducing it.

We are also grateful that you have chosen to direct this expression of support to Ontario's municipal councils, which for the time being have exclusive authority over decisions to remove, introduce or maintain this important public health practice at the local level. This will be helpful to our members in future presentations to councils that are considering such decisions.

We hope that more municipalities will heed your clearly stated advice on this matter. At the same time, we hope that your support for community water fluoridation is a signal that the Province of Ontario may be willing to consider our call (alPHa Resolution A14-4, attached) to take responsibility for this important public health intervention by mandating, funding and providing technical support for it.

We look forward to further discussions with you to develop a better strategy to ensure that all Ontarians, regardless of where they live, can enjoy the health benefits of community water fluoridation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jaeger". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Valerie Jaeger,
Acting President.

COPY: Roselle Martino, Assistant Deputy Minister, Population and Public Health Division

TITLE: A Provincial Approach to Community Water Fluoridation

SPONSOR: Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit

WHEREAS the relationship between poor oral health and poor overall health is well established; and

WHEREAS the relationship between poor oral health and social risks including speech development, ability to thrive and readiness to learn in children, and self-respect and employability in adults is also well established; and

WHEREAS the burden of poor oral health is greater for marginalized populations; and

WHEREAS most preventive and restorative oral health services in Ontario are “out-of-pocket” expenses that favour those with the ability to pay; and

WHEREAS there has been a documented marked decline in the rates of tooth decay where fluoride has been added to municipal water supplies; and

WHEREAS these health benefits extend to all residents in a community regardless of age, education, socio-economic status or access to other preventive measures; and

WHEREAS it is estimated that every \$1 invested in community water fluoridation yields an estimated \$38 in avoided costs for dental treatment; and

WHEREAS the current evidence supports that fluoridation based on a maximum allowable concentration (MAC) of 1.5 mg/L is safe; and

WHEREAS these health benefits extend to all residents in a community regardless of age, education, socio-economic status or access to other preventive measures; and

WHEREAS boards of health experience formidable challenges to the ongoing fluoridation of municipal drinking water and defending such challenges is taxing, consuming limited public health resources; and

WHEREAS despite the best efforts of boards of health, municipalities in Ontario have discontinued community water fluoridation, over the last five years effecting almost half a million people, or almost 4% of Ontario's population; and

WHEREAS jurisdictions that have legislated fluoridation at the state, provincial, territorial or national level of government have succeeded in increasing the percentage of their population receiving fluoridated water.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Association of Local Public Health Agencies call for the Province of Ontario to amend regulations of the Safe Drinking Water Act to require community water fluoridation for all

municipal water systems (when source-water levels are below the Health Canada-recommended level of 0.7 mg/L) to prevent dental caries;

AND FURTHER that the Province provide the funding and technical support to municipalities required for community water fluoridation.

ACTION FROM CONFERENCE:

Resolution CARRIED

**Ministry of Health
and Long-Term Care**

Office of the Minister

10th Floor, Hepburn Block
80 Grosvenor Street
Toronto ON M7A 2C4
Tel. 416 327-4300
Fax 416 326-1571
www.ontario.ca/health

**Ministère de la Santé
et des Soins de longue durée**

Bureau du ministre

Édifice Hepburn, 10^e étage
80, rue Grosvenor
Toronto ON M7A 2C4
Tél. 416 327-4300
Télééc. 416 326-1571
www.ontario.ca/sante



January 7, 2016

HLTC2976IT-2015-267

Dear Heads of Council,

We are writing to you today to draw your attention to a significant public health issue and to seek your support to address this important issue at the municipal level. There are a growing number of communities across Ontario that are choosing to discontinue fluoridation of their municipal drinking water system in spite of consistent evidence that water fluoridation is a safe and effective method to reduce the risk of oral health problems for Ontarians.

Tooth decay is the single most common chronic disease among Canadian children. The importance of maintaining good oral health should not be taken lightly - it is an important part of being healthy overall. Poor oral health is linked to diabetes, heart disease, respiratory conditions, osteoporosis, rheumatoid arthritis and low birth weight in babies. As such, water fluoridation is, and must be recognized, as a very important measure to protect the health of Ontarians.

The benefits of water fluoridation are well documented. More than 90 national and international professional health organizations, including Health Canada, the Canadian Public Health Association, the Public Health Agency of Canada, the Canadian Dental Association, the Canadian Medical Association, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization, have endorsed the use of fluoride at recommended levels to prevent tooth decay. In fact, the use of fluoride in drinking water has been called one of the greatest public health achievements of the 20th century by the CDC. According to expert research, fluoridated drinking water reduces the number of cavities in children's teeth, which contributes to their healthy development. Reductions of tooth decay have also been observed in adults and seniors who reside in communities with fluoridated water.

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Water fluoridation helps to reduce the cost of dental care. The Ontario Dental Association has stated that the cost of providing dental care if waiting until tooth decay occurs is much higher than the cost of preventing it. The CDC estimates that for every \$1 invested in community water fluoridation, \$38 is saved in dental treatment. Removing fluoride from drinking water will place those least able to afford or access dental treatment at a much higher risk for oral health problems. The health benefits of drinking water fluoridation extend to all residents in a community, regardless of age, socioeconomic status, education or employment.

Municipal leaders should consider carefully the range of factors and implications of removing fluoridation from municipal drinking water systems. We urge all of you to support fluoridation of drinking water in your communities so that everyone can enjoy the long-term health benefits.

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Eric Hoskins
Minister



David C. Williams, MD, MHSc, FRCPC
Acting Chief Medical Officer of Health

c. Roselle Martino, Assistant Deputy Minister, Population and Public Health Division