

**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**