



## Fluoridation and Public Health

**I** want to congratulate the CDA and the *Journal of the California Dental Association* on its July 2005 publication on public health dentistry. As a former practicing oral and maxillofacial surgeon who now works in dental public health, it is gratifying to see CDA inform the profession and the public about what we are doing to better the oral health of all Californians.

In the interest of completeness, I would like to correct some of the statements made by Dr. Marvin Marcus in his article on dental public health in California. While Dr. Marcus' article is essentially right on, some of the statistics quoted need to be corrected. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, California's fluoridation rate is 28.7 percent, not 50 percent as stated in the article. Also, while the fluoridation constituency has been very successful in elevating the fluoridation percentage in California, from 17 percent in 1995 to 28.7 percent currently, we do not rank anywhere near 40th in the United States. We do not rank 48th in the country as we did in 1995 when AB 733 was signed, but we are not ranked above 10 other states yet.

Sometime in late 2006 or very early in 2007, approximately 18 million residents

in six counties in Southern California, alluded to by Dr. Marcus, will have fluoridated water when the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California comes online. Until then, California will have approximately 10 million of its residents having the oral health benefits of fluoridated drinking water. Once the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California fluoridates its five treatment plants, California should be in the 60 percent to 70 percent range and close to the Healthy People 2010 goal of 75 percent.

CDA has played an integral part in the success of the water fluoridation effort in California. Not only was CDA the principal supporter of the Speier legislation, much of the bill was crafted by the Office of Government Affairs at CDA. The association has been a continual supporter of the fluoridation effort both monetarily and using in-kind staff support. Again, congratulations on a well-done issue of the *Journal*. Dental public health is every bit as important a specialty of dentistry as the other recognized specialties, and many times our work goes unnoticed.

Keep up the good work.

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