

# Community Water Fluoridation Policy Statement

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CDA has a long history of supporting community water fluoridation and remains committed to increasing the number of Californians who enjoy the oral health benefits of fluoridation. Before CDA became involved in the effort to increase the number of Californians receiving fluoridated water, California ranked 47th with only 17 percent of the population receiving fluoridated water. Since CDA became involved in 1990, the number of Californians receiving fluoridated water has quadrupled, with the largest single increase occurring in 2007, when the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California brought fluoridated water to an additional 18 million people. Today, over 62% of Californians have access to community water fluoridation.

CDA began its support of community water fluoridation in 1990 by adopting a policy statement to support fluoridation. In 1995, CDA advanced community fluoridation throughout the state by sponsoring Assembly Bill 733, legislation that requires communities with 10,000 or more water connections to fluoridate when funding becomes available to do so. In 1998, the CDA Foundation formed a collaborative partnership with the Department of Health Services (now the Department of Public Health) and the Dental Health Foundation to administer a California Endowment grant to fund such projects. The Metropolitan Water District, City of Los Angeles, San Diego, San Francisco, Sacramento, Santa Clara County, Escondido, Santa Maria and Daly City are just a few of the communities that have benefited from this grant funding.

In 2004, the CDA Board of Trustees agreed to fund efforts to preserve fluoridation in the cities of Palo Alto and Arcata in addition to providing resources to communities to fight anti-fluoridation sponsored initiatives and counsel to defend against legal challenges brought by these same groups. CDA also sponsored successful legislation in 2004 (SB 96), to strengthen and clarify AB 733, the existing statewide fluoridation law.

Thanks in large part to community water fluoridation, half of all children in the U.S. ages 5 to 17 have never had a cavity in their permanent teeth. According to the 2000 Journal of Dental Research, the use of fluoride in the past 40 years has been the primary factor in saving some \$40 billion in oral health care costs in the United States. Fluoride is nature's cavity fighter and is naturally occurring in all water sources. Community water fluoridation, has been around for over 50 years, and is simply the process of adjusting the fluoride content of community water to the recommended level for optimal dental health.

Nearly 100 national and international organizations recognize the public health benefits of community water fluoridation for preventing dental decay, including the American Dental Association, the U.S. Public Health Service, the American Medical Association, the World Health Organization, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the International Association for Dental Research, the National PTA and the American Cancer Society. In April 1999, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention proclaimed community water fluoridation as one of 10 great public health achievements of the 20th century.

Despite widespread support for the safety and efficacy of community water fluoridation, there continues to be controversy over this effective public health measure. Through legislative advocacy, and providing legal counsel and education of the public and decision-makers, CDA continues to support community water fluoridation efforts in California.

*Revised October 2013*