

December 22, 2015

VADM Vivek H. Murthy
Surgeon General
United States Public Health Service
Tower Building
Plaza Level 1, Room 100
1101 Wootton Parkway
Rockville, MD 20852

Dear Dr. Murthy:

On behalf of our 158,000 members, we are writing to thank you for issuing a statement commemorating the 70th anniversary of community water fluoridation—one of ten great public health achievements of the 20th century.¹

In 1945, Grand Rapids, Michigan, became the world's first city to adjust the level of fluoride in its community water supply to optimal levels. The decision was based on investigations and clinical observations dating back to the early 1900s, which correlated fluoride levels in water with reduced incidence of dental decay.

Fifteen years after adjusting the fluoride content of its public water supply to optimal levels, researchers found the children in Grand Rapids who drank fluoridated water from birth had 50 to 63 percent less tooth decay.² Subsequent studies affirmed the safety and effectiveness of the measure, and public health officials began urging other communities to embrace the practice.³⁻⁴

Today, nearly 75 percent of the U.S. population served by public water utilities—more than 210 million people—now receive the benefits of optimally fluoridated water.⁵ Studies show that community water fluoridation prevents at least 25 percent of tooth decay in children and adults, even with the widespread availability of fluoride from other sources, such as fluoride toothpaste.⁶⁻⁷

The preponderance of credible scientific evidence supports the continued safety and effectiveness of community water fluoridation. We are pleased to be working with you and others in the public health community to expand the practice.

We applaud you for commemorating the 70th anniversary of community water fluoridation with a statement acknowledging the practice as a safe, beneficial, and cost-effective public health measure for preventing tooth decay. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Robert J. Burns at 202-789-5176 or burns@ada.org.

Sincerely,

/s/

Carol Gomez Summerhays, D.D.S.
President

CGS:KTO:rjb

/s/

Kathleen T. O'Loughlin, D.M.D., M.P.H.
Executive Director

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Ten Great Public Health Achievements -- United States, 1900-1999. MMWR 1999; 48(12): 241-243.

² Arnold FA Jr., Likins RC, Russell AL, Scott DB. Fifteenth year of the Grand Rapids fluoridation study. J Am Dent Assoc 1962; 65: 780-5.

³ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Oral Health in America: A Report of the Surgeon General. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research, National Institutes of Health, 2000.

⁴ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, Surgeon General statement on community water fluoridation, Washington, D.C.; December 3, 2001.

⁵ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2012 Water Fluoridation Statistics.

⁶ Guide to Community Preventive Services. Preventing dental caries: community water fluoridation. April 2013.

⁷ Griffin SO, et al. Effectiveness of fluoride in preventing caries in adults. J Dent Res 2007; 86(5):410-415.