



May 3, 2017

Members of the Meadville Area Water Authority Board,

On behalf of the Pennsylvania Academy of General Dentistry (AGD), and its 1,300 members, I am writing to respectfully ask you to support fluoridation of the Meadville water system. The Pennsylvania AGD has long been committed to the practice of community water fluoridation as a safe, practical, and cost-effective means of improving oral health and preventing tooth decay.

Regarding the use of fluoride in water supplies, AGD policy states:

When used appropriately, fluoride is safe and effective in preventing and controlling dental caries. Regular use throughout life will help protect teeth against decay. All water supplies, including bottled water, should have appropriate fluoride levels. All fluoridated items, including toothpaste, should be used as recommended by your dentist.

The safety and benefits of fluoride are well documented and have been reviewed comprehensively by scientific and public health organizations in the U.S. and internationally. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), water fluoridation has been shown to reduce tooth decay in children and adults by approximately 25 percent. Based on its contribution to the dramatic decline in tooth decay in the U.S. since the 1960s, the CDC named community water fluoridation one of 10 great public health achievements of the 20th century.

The AGD, along with many other dental and public health organizations, has worked to promote among the public an approach to dental care that emphasizes prevention of dental disease. Accordingly, community water fluoridation is the most efficient and cost-effective public health measure in preventing dental disease, and has been proven to result in cost-savings for taxpayers. Studies carried out by the CDC show that for cities with a population under 20,000, every \$1 invested in water fluoridation results in \$16 savings in dental treatment costs.

As a policymaker, the most effective measure you can take to prevent tooth decay and improve oral health for the residents of Meadville is to support the reintroduction of fluoride into the area water system. Again, I respectfully ask that you support any measure seeking to introduce fluoride into the Meadville water system at the May 4, 2017 meeting of the Meadville Area Water Authority Board.

Sincerely,

Andrew Stewart, DMD, MAGD, ABGD
President
Pennsylvania Academy of General Dentistry

Your voice for excellence through education and advocacy