**Statement in Support of Community Water Fluoridation**

**Virginia Dental Hygienists’ Association**

The Virginia Dental Hygienists’ Association (VDHA) supports community water fluoridation as a safe and effective public health strategy to prevent tooth decay in children and adults. VDHA policy advocates evidence-based practice modalities, including fluoride therapies, for the prevention of disease for the public that we serve. The American Dental Hygienists’ Association supports education of the public and other health professionals regarding the preventive and therapeutic benefits of fluoride.

In Virginia, more than 5.8 million citizens consume water that has been adjusted with fluoride to the optimal level. Optimal level standards are set by the Environmental Protection Agency under the federal Safe Drinking Water Act. The Virginia Board of Health recommends that all public water systems in Virginia be optimally fluoridated. (1)

Fluoride, both systemic and topical, is a well-known preventive strategy to prevent tooth decay. It is shown to prevent the formation of cavities, slow the progression of cavities, and reverse the progression of the initial stages of cavity formation. Fluoridated water provides added protection against tooth decay in children, despite the widespread use of fluoride toothpaste. (2) (3). It is the most effective public health measure to prevent costly tooth decay, resulting in up to a 40% reduction in decay rates.

The most effective way to reduce the gap in tooth decay rates between income groups is water fluoridation. Water fluoridation benefits children and adults regardless of income level or insurance status. (4) Additionally, the cost savings on future dental care are significant. For every $1 spent on water fluoridation, $38 is saved in dental treatment costs. (5)

Claims of potential toxicity from fluoridated water have not been supported by studies of scientific merit. (6)

VDHA appreciates the opportunity to comment on this very important topic.

1. Policy Statement Regarding Community Water Fluoridation. Virginia State Board of Health, July 18, 2008.
2. “Preventing Dental Caries” Community Water Fluoridation,” U.S. Task Force on Community Preventive Services (2000).
3. Singh KA, et al. “Relative Effects of Pre- and Posteruption Water Fluoride on Caries Experience of Permanent First Molars,” Journal of Public Health Dentistry, 63:1, Winter 2003.
4. Burt BA. “Fluoridation and Social Equity”, Journal of Public Health Dentistry, 2002, 62:4;195-255.
5. “Cost Savings for Community Water Fluoridation”, Centers for Disease Control.
6. “Community Water Fluoridation in the United States”, Policy Statement. American Public Health Association, 2008.

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You may contact VDHA President for more information

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