

Policy Statement Regarding Community Water Fluoridation

**Virginia State Board of Health
July 18, 2008**

Community water fluoridation is a public health measure first endorsed by the Virginia State Board of Health in 1951. Today, more than 5.8 million Virginians consume water that has been adjusted with fluoride to the optimal level. Community water fluoridation is still the most cost-effective means of reducing tooth decay, and can result in up to a 40% reduction in dental disease. Water fluoridation benefits everyone regardless of age, income level, or insurance status. It has been cited as one of the ten great public health achievements of the 20th century by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Fluoride at optimal levels in drinking water has been proven safe and effective in reducing tooth decay. Fluoridated drinking water for the prevention of tooth decay has been endorsed by numerous medical, dental and public health organizations.

In keeping with the Virginia State Board of Health Chronic Disease Prevention and Control Initiative, the Board recommends that:

- All public water systems in Virginia be optimally fluoridated, as community water fluoridation is the most effective public health measure to prevent tooth decay.
- State and local government officials move in the direction of providing this health benefit for those citizens in localities where community fluoridation is not already in place.
- Localities emphasize and actively promote effective oral health preventive programs to include population-based fluoride programs (including fluoride rinse and varnish), sealant programs, regular clinical dental care, and tobacco use prevention.