



*Sharing our pride. Shaping our future.*

Fluoridation meeting: Submission from the Ontario Dental Assistants Association.

London, ON

January 25, 2012

Good Evening:

Mr. Usher, Councillors, London Residents

The Ontario Dental Assistants Association is the professional membership association and Certifying Body for 8,400 Ontario dental assistants with 700 London based members. ODAA is located in London and we are the proud owners of a large heritage home located in Old East London.

Dental assistants are an integral part of the dental team and facilitate the work of both dentists and dental hygienists. Dental assistants are front-line health care workers who have considerable contact and connection with dental patients. Dental assistants take radiographs, provide oral hygiene instruction, and perform many other intra-oral duties. Dental assistants provide chairside assistance to dentists during treatment procedures and are responsible for many of the duties associated with infection control within a dental setting.

Community water fluoridation is a safe and effective means of preventing tooth decay. Fluoride keeps the enamel of the tooth strong and solid by preventing the loss of important minerals. Children need fluoride protection while their teeth are developing and fluoridated water is equally beneficial to adults as it prevents cavities.

Good oral health is related to good overall health. Poor dental health can be related to heart disease, stroke, diabetes and premature and low birth weight babies born to women who have serious gum disease. Furthermore, premature and low birth weight babies are at greater risk for asthma, ear infections, behavioural problems and infant death.

Older adults may have a harder time keeping their teeth and gums healthy due to lower incomes, lack of dental insurance; poor general health and increased dependency on others for personal care.

Furthermore, people with poor dental health may suffer from depression, low self-esteem and self-worth. A healthy mouth is an important component in realizing one's potential and life aspirations.

Many of us take our health for granted and it is often not until we are sick or injured that we realize how connected our body parts are. For those of us with dental insurance who regularly go to the dentist for cleanings and check-ups, the issue of fluoridated water may not be important. However, as health care practitioners, and caring and concerned citizens we must recognize that there are thousands of Londoners who do not regularly go to the dentist due to a lack of money, knowledge or perhaps fear. A caring city must remember these people as a strong community is one that takes care of its most vulnerable citizens.

Leaders and elected representatives have great responsibilities. We must perform due diligence and do what is best for the "greater good". Community water fluoridation is a safe, cost effective preventive measure that has positive health effects on all members of our community.

The Ontario Dental Assistants Association urges you to make the right decision and to continue with our community water fluoridation program. It was a good, forward thinking decision in 1967 and it remains so now.