

Speaking Points
Fluoridated Drinking Water, City of London, Public Consultation meeting of the Civic Works
Committee of City Council
Dr. Arlene King
Wednesday, January 25, 2012
Word Count: 667

- Good evening.
- I am very pleased to be here today to add my voice to those in support of water fluoridation.
Excellent presentation by staff here your staff & my colleagues from HC, Dr. Peter County
- As Chief Medical Officer of Health for Ontario, I am very concerned about the loss of fluoridated drinking water in certain communities in spite of consistent evidence that water fluoridation is safe and effective.
- We have already seen the impact of removing fluoride from municipal drinking water systems here in Ontario.
- As was noted in a recent report to Toronto's Board of Health on water fluoridation, the rate of dental decay in 5 year olds in the municipality of Dryden increased by 26% in the seven years after water fluoridation was discontinued.

- And local surveillance conducted by the Simcoe Muskoka District Health unit has found that children in non-fluoridated areas of Simcoe Muskoka have 30 per cent more cavities than those in fluoridated areas.
- The value of drinking water fluoridation should not be underestimated.
- As tooth decay is the single most common chronic disease among Canadians of all ages, water fluoridation is an extremely important public health measure.
- In fact water fluoridation has been called one of the greatest public health achievements of the 20th century by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- The benefits of water fluoridation are well documented.
- Even with other sources of fluoride available today, fluoridated water supplies still have an

impact on reducing the rates of tooth decay not only in children, but adults and seniors as well.

- Water fluoridation also has the capacity to help reduce dental care expenditures.
- The CDC estimates \$38 in avoided costs for dental treatment for every \$1 invested in community water fluoridation.
- The fluoridation of drinking water plays such an important role in the overall promotion of good oral health and prevention of dental decay.
- And I am very concerned that removing it from drinking water may put a strain on, and impact the success of, important provincial programs such as the Children in Need of Treatment Program and Healthy Smiles Ontario - both developed to benefit those least able to afford dental services.
- In Middlesex-London, approximately \$500,000 are spent through these programs each year on urgent treatment needs for children less than 18 years of age who cannot afford dental care. This is far more

than it costs to fluoridate London's water which is estimated to cost \$133,000 per year. Without fluoridation, treatment costs are expected to increase.

- And indeed, removing fluoride from drinking water will place those least able to afford or access dental treatment at an increased risk for oral health problems.
- The health benefits of drinking water fluoridation extend to all residents in a community, regardless of age, socioeconomic status, education or employment...
- ...Drinking water fluoridation is a great equalizer.
- I also want to assure you that fluoridated drinking water is safe.
- In Ontario, fluoride additives are required to meet rigorous standards of quality and purity before they can be used.

- When they are added to water at levels recommended in Ontario, the weight of evidence from available studies does not support the link between exposure to fluoride in drinking water and any adverse health effects, including those related to cancer, bone fractures or intelligence levels.
- It is important to remember that good oral health is so important to one's overall health.
- In fact, last year, the Globe and Mail ran a special section on oral health, and one element really stuck with me – the Canadian Dental Association's definition of oral health as contributing positively to:
physical, mental and social well-being and the enjoyment of life's possibilities, by allowing the individual to speak, eat and socialize unhindered by pain, discomfort or embarrassment.
- It is important that London continue to fluoridate its water as they have done since the late 1960s so that the residents can continue to enjoy the lasting health benefits.

• Thank you.

I apologize I have to be
back in Toronto. I appreciate time for
PH in Ontario.

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- excellent
service in
your staff,
LMSH &
Dr. Conroy