



Rick Scott  
Governor

H. Frank Farmer, Jr., MD, PhD, FACP  
State Surgeon General

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## POLICY STATEMENT ON COMMUNITY WATER FLUORIDATION

The Florida Department of Health is strongly committed to the fluoridation of community water systems. Fluoridation began nationally over sixty years ago and the Florida State Board of Health officially endorsed fluoridation in 1949. Strong support and active promotion of the measure as a safe, economical and effective means of reducing tooth decay has continued. Today, fluoridation is still the most cost-effective way to prevent dental cavities. It is an ideal public health measure where everyone benefits, whether rich or poor, no matter the age, without requiring any conscious effort of the individual.

Beginning in Gainesville in 1949, Florida cities have embraced the concept of fluoridation for their citizens. At present, approximately 13.4 million people are benefiting from fluoridation in Florida. In 2008, the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimated, over 195 million people in the United States benefit from water containing fluoride at the recommended level for controlling dental decay.

National surveys of oral health dating back several decades document the continued benefit of fluoride in decreasing tooth decay in children and adults. It is doubtful that any other public health procedure has undergone more research, epidemiological study and intense public scrutiny than water fluoridation. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in 1999 recognized fluoridation as one of the ten great public health achievements of the twentieth century. In the last few years, systematic reviews of community water fluoridation studies through the *Surgeon General's Report on Oral Health in America*, CDC's *Recommendations for Using Fluoride to Prevent and Control Dental Caries in the United States*, and the *Oral Health Report* issued by the Task Force on Community Preventive Services have all reinforced the safety and efficacy of fluoridation in preventing dental decay in both children and adults.

Along with the overwhelming majority of the world's health care organizations and leaders within the scientific community, the Florida Department of Health firmly supports and continues to recommend water fluoridation as the most economical and effective means to control the major public health problem of dental caries.

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