

Colorado Oral Health Coalition

Position Statement on Community Water Fluoridation

Background

Community water fluoridation is the process of adjusting the naturally occurring fluoride level in public water supplies to a safe, optimal, evidence-based concentration that helps prevent and reduce tooth decay. This practice has been recognized by leading public health, dental, and medical organizations, including the American Dental Association, American Academy of Pediatrics, and American Academy of Family Medicine, American Public Health Association, American Medical Association, and World Health Organization, as a safe, effective, and equitable approach to improving oral health at the population level.

Our Position

The **Colorado Oral Health Coalition** supports community water fluoridation as a cornerstone public health measure to prevent tooth decay and promote oral health equity. We affirm the extensive body of scientific evidence demonstrating that water fluoridation:

- Reduces cavities in children and adults by approximately 25% over a lifetime
- Is safe for individuals across the lifespan, including children, pregnant people, and older adults
- Offers cost savings for families and health systems by reducing the need for dental treatment
- Helps reduce disparities in oral health outcomes, especially for communities with limited access to preventive dental care

Our Commitment

As a statewide coalition dedicated to advancing equitable oral health outcomes, the Colorado Oral Health Coalition:

- Maintains a statewide coalition that is inclusive and representative of community priorities.
- Monitors and responds to timely or emerging oral health-related issues through cross sector collaboration.
- Promotes oral health education in high-risk communities.

Equity Lens

The Colorado Oral Health Coalition recognizes that the burden of oral disease falls disproportionately on low-income communities, rural populations, people of color, and individuals with disabilities. Community water fluoridation is one of the few public health interventions that reaches people regardless of income, insurance status, or ability to access dental services, making it a powerful tool in reducing oral health inequities.

Conclusion

Water fluoridation remains a critical, community-level strategy to ensure all Coloradans, especially those facing systemic barriers to care, can live healthier lives. The Colorado Oral Health Coalition will continue to support science-based policy and community-driven efforts to preserve and

expand access to optimally fluoridated drinking water as part of our mission to advance oral health equity across the state.