

No. 7, Fall 2006

**To: State Water Fluoridation Programs, State Dental Directors,
State Drinking Water Programs**

Subject: Program Update—CDC Community Water Fluoridation

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Community Water Fluoridation (CWF) Program is administered by the Division of Oral Health, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. The CWF Program periodically issues this update on program activities and resources for water fluoridation specialists, engineers with state drinking water programs, and state oral health officials. Please feel free to forward this communication to any staff member or other person who might benefit from it.

Water Fluoridation Training

The CDC-sponsored course on basic community water fluoridation, **Water Fluoridation: Principles and Practices**, will be conducted next in Sacramento, California during the week of March 26–30, 2007. The course is intended to build the skills needed to manage and operate a state water fluoridation program and to train engineers in fluoridation engineering principles. The training announcement is included at the end of this newsletter.

2006 Discrepancy Report, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Fluoride Levels

CDC sent two notifications to state water fluoridation programs advising that state records in the CDC Water Fluoridation Reporting System (WFRS) should be updated. WFRS is an important tool in the management of state water fluoridation programs. To assist states, CDC collaborated with the EPA to prepare a discrepancy report for calendar year 2005 that identified differences between the information reported by state drinking water programs in the Safe Drinking Water Information System (SDWIS) and the comparable information currently contained in WFRS. Many states found this report to be useful because it showed which data were missing from WFRS. Because of the success of this tool, CDC has once again collaborated with the EPA to prepare a discrepancy report for 2006; this report was sent to all states in June. It is requested that state provide their updates to WFRS by December 15, 2006, so that the 2006 Water Fluoridation Report can be prepared in a timely manner. If state programs require more information or assistance from CDC before they enter their data on the WFRS spreadsheet, please submit a request for the information or assistance to CDC by November 1, 2006. In response to a request from EPA, we also ask that states send us updated data on the natural fluoride levels in state water systems. EPA will use this information to improve its upcoming regulatory assessment of the maximum contaminant level for fluoride.

Water Fluoridation Quality Awards

Community water fluoridation is safe, healthy, and effective. To obtain the full benefits of optimally fluoridated water, the fluoride levels provided by a water system should be consistent. Each year, CDC presents Water Fluoridation Quality Awards to the adjusted water systems that 1) achieved 12 months of consistent operation within the optimal range, and 2) document this consistency in WFRS. CDC has mailed the 2005 awards, which recognized 1,119 community water systems in 23 states. Water utilities value receiving CDC's quality awards. This is an important incentive for states to encourage better operating results. If your state does not have water systems that have earned this important recognition, please contact us to learn what you need to do to participate in this awards program.

Other water fluoridation awards presented this year by the Association of State and Territorial Dental Directors, the American Dental Association, and CDC at the National Oral Health Conference were State Fluoridation Initiative Awards to Florida and Mississippi and State Fluoridation Quality Awards to Indiana, Nevada, and North Dakota.

Council of State Governments and European Parliament Supporting Policies on Fluoridation

The Council of State Governments has issued a resolution in support of community water fluoridation. The resolution can be viewed at <http://www.csg.org/policy/documents/CommunityWaterFluoridation.pdf>.

Also endorsing the use of fluoride, the European Parliament voted on May 16, 2006, (526 in favor and 126 against) to maintain fluorides on the approved list of food additives so that salt and water fluoridation programs can continue.

Proficiency Testing Program Upgrade

Proper measurement of fluoride in water requires diligence and attention to detail. Most states require split samples for water systems so that state reference laboratories can verify the methods used by water systems. For more than 25 years, CDC has operated the water laboratory proficiency testing program to confirm the fluoride analysis methods of the state reference laboratories. This fall, CDC will implement a Web-based system for submitting and reporting results, which will replace the current fax-based system. This system will provide improved information and reports to reference laboratories, state dental directors, and state drinking water administrators. Additional details are included at the end of this newsletter.

American Water Works Association Webcast on Water Fluoridation

The American Water Works Association (AWWA) hosted a Webcast on the fluoride in drinking water on May 3, 2006. Speakers were Dr. John Doull of the National Research Council (NRC) of the National Academy of Sciences; Kip Duchon, CDC's National Fluoridation Engineer; and Dave Heumann, the Fluoridation Manager for the City of Los

Angeles. This Webcast provided information from the recent NRC report to EPA on fluoride in drinking water, about the safety and effectiveness of water fluoridation, and on the perspective of utilities on implementing water fluoridation. A number of communities found this Webcast to be an important resource for helping citizens and community leaders learn about and understand community water fluoridation. An archived version of this Webcast is available. For more information, please contact Linda Berridge at lberridge@awwa.org.

Recent Information on Osteosarcoma and Water Fluoridation

Last spring, results of a study published by Dr. Elise Bassin and colleagues from Harvard University suggested an association between drinking fluoridated water and osteosarcoma in adolescent males. The authors of this article, as well as the authors of the recently issued National Resource Council's report on fluoride in drinking water, acknowledged that this study has limitations related to its study methods and that results of a broader hospital-based study, also being conducted by researchers at Harvard University, which will be published soon, may provide a more definitive consideration of the issue. State water fluoridation programs continue to receive questions concerning this study. CDC has issued a statement on the Bassin paper, which can be viewed at http://www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/waterfluoridation/fact_sheets/osteosarcoma.htm. Another perspective on this study recently was released by the Australia Department of Human Services' Public Health Branch in collaboration with The Cancer Council of Victoria; a copy of their statement is attached. More than 70 percent of the population of Australia consumes fluoridated water.

Modification to Oral Health Maps

A data application on the CDC Water fluoridation Web pages is Oral Health Maps <http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/gisdoh/>. This application provides public access to water fluoridation on a GIS basis for participating states. CDC identified an error in how consecutive water systems were aggregated in the summary files for some states leading to incorrect reporting of fluoridation status. This error principally affected approximately 6 states, and has now been corrected.