

Kentucky Dental Hygienists' Association Statement re:
SB37 and HB97

Kentucky has a long history struggling with oral disease, infection, and decay. In fact, Kentucky is consistently ranked among the poorest in oral health. Public health officials and dental professionals throughout our state have worked hard to ensure our water stays a source of fluoride for our citizens, preventing tooth decay and the risk of infection and disease associated with it. Optimal community water fluoridation is one of the easiest ways to achieve this goal and is one of the only measures where all residents, regardless of race, ethnicity, income or region, are able to enjoy the benefits. The Kentucky Dental Hygienists' Association opposes SB37 and HB97.

Optimally fluoridated community water has been researched extensively for safety and efficacy by multiple credible organizations over a time period of more than 70 years, including the Center for Disease Control (CDC). It has been supported by the United States Supreme Court and touted as a top public health achievement in reduction of disease. The CDC states that while many health concerns have been posed over fluoridated water, frequent research and re-evaluations have shown no correlation or evidence to support any association to health risks. They go on to say, "Drinking fluoridated water keeps teeth strong and reduces cavities (also called tooth decay) by about 25% in children and adults. By preventing cavities, community water fluoridation has been shown to save money for families and for the US health care system."

Cavities are still the most common chronic disease for children in our nation, and for children in rural and urban areas and with lower socioeconomic families, the decay rates increase. Fluoride occurs naturally in some water sources and should continue to be regulated to ensure our communities throughout Kentucky are getting the optimal level for decay reduction recommended by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). HHS says "untreated decay can cause pain, school absences, difficulty concentrating, and poor appearance—all contributing to decreased quality of life and ability to succeed."

Our national organization, the American Dental Hygienists' Association, supports education regarding the preventive and therapeutic benefits, safety and cost effectiveness of community water fluoridation. More than 100 respected organizations support optimal community water fluoridation for the purpose of preventing decay. We want to see the citizens of Kentucky healthy and ready to participate in society, with children in the classroom and adults' part of the workforce.

We encourage review of the following links for anyone interested in learning more about the safety and benefits of community water fluoridation:

<https://www.astdd.org/www/docs/community-water-fluoridation.pdf>

<https://www.astdd.org/www/docs/natural-fluoride-fact-sheet-9-14-2016.pdf>

<https://ilikemyteeth.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/FluorideSafetyforHealthProfessionals.pdf>

<http://fluoridescience.org/fluoride-topics/dental-caries/>

<https://tapintohealthyteeth.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/cdc-statement.pdf>

<http://www.adha.org/statement-from-adha-on-water-fluoridation>

<https://www.cdc.gov/fluoridation/index.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/fluoridation/guidelines/cdc-statement-on-community-water-fluoridation.html>