

Final 1-5



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President

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The Honorable Cecile Bledsoe
Chair, Senate Public Health Committee
State Capitol
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201

The Honorable Kelley Linck
Chair, House Public Health Committee
State Capitol
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201

To the Members of the Joint Interim Committee on Public Health, Welfare and Labor:

Thank you for your interest in matters related to oral health. As the oral health experts in our state, nearly all of our approximately 1,100 member dentists support fluoridation efforts. As licensed dentists, our first and foremost responsibility is to the health, safety and welfare of the citizens of Arkansas. Please consider the following points of interest that illustrate the positive effects of fluoridation on the health of our citizens; and as taxpayers, we share your interest in minimizing state spending when possible.

Health/Economic Facts

- Studies continue to confirm that fluoridation has substantial, lifelong decay preventive effects and is a highly economical means of preventing tooth decay in the United States, regardless of an individual's socioeconomic status.
- The lifetime cost per person to fluoridate a water system is less than the cost of one dental filling or roughly 50 cents per person per year.
- With escalating health care costs, fluoridation remains a preventive measure at minimal cost.
- The economic importance of fluoridation is underscored by the fact that frequently the cost of treating dental disease is paid not only by the affected individual, but also by taxpayers through publicly supported programs.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) scientists estimate that for every one dollar invested in fluoridation, \$39 is averted in dental treatment costs.
- At full implementation of Act 197, community water fluoridation (CWF) will save the state approximately \$19 million in costs, much of it from Medicaid and ARKids First.
- 74% of Arkansans support CWF for 2 primary reasons:
 - Fluoridation reduces tooth decay in children and adults (humanitarian)
 - Will save the state millions in the state's Medicaid and ARKids First Programs (economic)

Once again, thank you for your diligence as it relates to this matter. Also, we appreciate the opportunity to express our support for fluoridation efforts that result in healthier individuals and reduced state spending.

Respectfully submitted,

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