



Testimony on the usage of fluoride by Milwaukee Water Works

**Given by Matt Crespín, RDH, MPH
Associate Director
Children's Health Alliance of Wisconsin
May 31, 2012**

To Rules and Steering Committee of the Common Council of the City of Milwaukee

Good afternoon and thank you for the opportunity to provide comments and insight on this issue today. My name is Matt Crespín and I am the associate director of Children's Health Alliance of Wisconsin. I consider myself a native Milwaukee resident now after moving here 15 years ago to attend Marquette University. I currently oversee all oral health programming at the Alliance which includes the Wisconsin Oral Health Coalition, Wisconsin Seal-A-Smile program and various other state and local efforts. We do not support the resolutions being discussed today and urge the committee to continue fluoridating Milwaukee's water at optimum levels.

Wisconsin Seal-A-Smile is a statewide school-based dental sealant program. Local health departments, dental providers and community clinics take portable dental equipment into schools and provide preventive oral health care to nearly 30,000 children statewide. I say this with pride however know that our budget annually is nearly \$600,000. This is slightly more than the city of Milwaukee spends on water fluoridation that benefits nearly 1 million people of all ages.

I urge you first and foremost to continue Milwaukee's fluoridation program because as you've heard today from many of our partners both local and statewide from various professions that it is safe and effective. Secondly, the resolution to use the \$540,000 saved by dropping our fluoridation program looks good at first glance but as I've shared with you it just will not go far in providing necessary care to children with difficulty accessing dental care. It simply does not make sense to remove a proven system in fluoridation that benefits the whole community and then serve only a fraction

of Milwaukee's children with the savings. This funding would only allow approximately 15,000 children to receive annual topical fluoride varnish applications. With over 110,000 children in Milwaukee eligible for Medicaid dental benefits you simply just can't justify serving only a select few. While we generally endorse programs like the second resolution proposes it just simply is not a good use of public funds to rob from Peter to serve Paul.

Again I urge the committee to look at the evidence-based, peer reviewed research and documentation on the safety of fluoride. The speculation surrounding various negative health impacts does not have compelling evidence to support the removal of this valuable, natural mineral from Milwaukee's water that improves the oral health of ALL metro Milwaukee residents. Thank you.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Matt Crespin".

Matt Crespin, MPH, RDH
Associate Director