

Dr Angela M. Lueck's testimony
Common Council Steering and Rules Committee
Milwaukee Fluoride Issue

May 31, 2012

Good afternoon members of the Steering and Rules Committee. I thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today to share my views in support of continued fluoridation of the Milwaukee Public Water System.

My name is Angela Lueck and I grew up in a farming community 45 minutes outside of Milwaukee. I graduated from Marquette University School of Dentistry in 1998 and moved to San Diego, California where I practiced for almost 10yrs before returning to Milwaukee in 2007. I returned to the Midwest to spend more time with my family and to enjoy all that Wisconsin has to offer. My partner Bryan Gapson and I own a group practice on Water Street in downtown Milwaukee. I serve on the Board of Directors for the Greater Milwaukee Dental Association and am a member of the WDA as well as the ADA. I live in Shorewood which like my office has Milwaukee public water and I enjoy drinking that water every day.

We learned early on in dental school the benefits of Fluoride in the developing dentition from a molecular level. There is a wealth of science supporting its benefits and the Centers for Disease Control, the Surgeon General and the Public Health Service have all agreed that fluoride is both a safe and effective way in preventing and controlling dental caries. When I heard that there was a resolution suggesting the removal of fluoride from our public water system I was shocked. Milwaukee and its surrounding communities benefit greatly from fluoridated water especially children, a percentage of whom do not have regular dental visits. These same children may also receive their only substantial and nutritious meal while at school, and may not have the same access to care that some others have. They may not have fluoridated toothpastes, mouth rinses or vitamins, but what they all have access to is water. These are the individuals that will suffer the most in their degree of dental decay and emergency dental visits in their adolescent years as a result of non-fluoridated public drinking water. And who ends up paying for their emergencies? The taxpayers.

Dentists could make a lot of money if our public water wasn't fluoridated because we would have to see everybody and professionally apply the fluoride ourselves. What about those that couldn't afford the trip to the dentist to receive the professionally applied fluoride? We would make a lot of money fixing their decayed teeth in the future. But we aren't just running a business, we are upholding our profession, where we care more about the people in our communities than our own financial interests.

I have volunteered my time over the years in rural areas where fluoridated water wasn't available and it was alarming how many permanent teeth I had to remove in young persons under the age of 20 due to extensive decay. I distinctly remember a beautiful, 17 year old girl. One of her front teeth needed to be extracted and it was disturbing to have to perform this procedure. Access to fluoride would certainly

have helped this young girl. She and her family could not afford a tooth replacement and she left crying with a hole in the front her mouth. Imagine trying to meet a significant other, secure a good job, or smile confidently without a front tooth.

There are other instances where I have treated children under 10 that have so many cavities that their teeth need to be pulled instead of restoring them. These children are forever afraid to go to the dentist and where there is decay in baby teeth there will certainly be decay in permanent teeth. These children could certainly benefit from fluoridated water.

Education is very important in preventing tooth decay in all individuals but even more impactful is fluoridated water because it gets to everyone no matter what their socioeconomic status is.

Thank you, members of the Committee, for taking the time to listen to my support for community water fluoridation. I respectfully request that you vote "no" on Alderman Bohl's resolution 121087 because it will remove the benefits that all members of the public currently enjoy as a result of community water fluoridation which has been in existence in Milwaukee since the 1950's. Unfortunately, if you vote to remove fluoride, it is the public that will pay the price- because they will end up having a higher rate of dental disease and will end up having to pay money to fix decay that could have been prevented in a more cost-effective manner. Thank you again for your time and your attention.