

Washington State Board of Health: Testimony

Agenda Item: 13

Meeting Date: November 13, 2013

Position: Support

Submit Date: November 8th, 2013

To: wsboh@doh.wa.gov

Every child of Washington deserves to have a healthy mouth and caring dental provider. I support your efforts to make oral health a priority for the Washington State Board of Health. Children with cavities find it difficult to eat, sleep, learn and play. I've seen too many young children come to my office too late - when their mouth is already full of cavities. The good news is that cavities are preventable.

In my practice, we believe every child should be treated the way we would like our own children treated. We educate our young patients to brush, floss, eat healthy food, and drink fluoridated water. We create an environment where children feel safe, have their needs met, and want to come back. This is done for all children, regardless of their insurance coverage. We are able to do this largely through the Access to Baby and Child Dentistry (ABCD) program that provides us advanced training, enhanced reimbursement for services, and referral support for patients. This program certainly has helped improve our practice and the lives of children throughout the State of Washington.

Since the 1940s, communities across the nation have been fluoridating their water to reduce tooth decay. Our practice has a unique perspective on fluoridation as our Snoqualmie office is located in a non-fluoridated community while patients at our Bellevue office live in a city with access to community water fluoridation. The advantage of fluoridation shows in the disease rates of our patients. Bellevue's residents are among the nearly 205 million Americans who receive the health benefits of community water fluoridation by simply turning on the tap. The board has sided with science over science fiction by listening to the over six decades of practical experience that shows community water fluoridation to be safe and effective at slowing the spread of cavities for everyone.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment. We continue to learn more about the association between dental disease and our overall health – from heart disease to diabetes. Your time and resources are well spent to set the stage for civic and governmental engagement on improving oral health for Washington residents.

Sincerely,

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