



DATE: March 9, 2016

TO: Washington State Board of Health Members

FROM: James Sledge, Board Member

SUBJECT: RULES HEARING - WAC 246-290-460, FLUORIDATION OF DRINKING WATER

Background and Summary:

RCW 43.20.050 authorizes the Washington State Board of Health (Board) to adopt rules regarding drinking water systems. The Board and Department of Health (Department) have been working to update WAC 246-290-460, Fluoridation of drinking water. The rule does not require that water systems add fluoride. Public water systems may choose to fluoridate under their own authorities. The Board's rule specifies the acceptable parameters for fluoridation of drinking water such as the allowable concentration, testing and monitoring, and other aspects of operation for those systems that choose to fluoridate.

The rule making process was initiated in May of 2011. The Board initiated rule making at that time in response to the U.S. Public Health and Human Services (HHS) release of a preliminary draft of new fluoride recommendations and in response to a number of rule-making petitions on the issue of fluoridation of drinking water. The Board received a total of 17 rule making petitions regarding fluoride beginning in May 2010. A summary document of the petitions is provided for Board members under Tab 10d. The final HHS recommendation was published in 2015 and rule making resumed with direction from the Board to align the state rule with the new recommendation, add notification requirements, and provide clarifying language. The proposed fluoride rule includes a fluoride range that is built around the HHS recommendation. HHS has identified an "optimal fluoride level" based on their review of the scientific literature.

It should be noted that HHS took a very long time to publish their final recommendation because they were carefully considering the numerous comments they received regarding fluoridation. The HHS reports their conclusions regarding the most common issues identified in the comments. The HHS report discusses their conclusions on: dental fluorosis, bone fractures and skeletal fluorosis, carcinogenicity, IQ and neurological effects, endocrine disruption, carries prevention efficacy, cost effectiveness of Community Water Fluoridation, safety of fluoride additives, and the ethics of Community Water Fluoridation. After thoughtful review, HHS concluded that Community Water Fluoridation remains an effective public health strategy.

During this time, the Board was also engaged in oral health issues and issued *Seven Strategies for Oral Health in Washington*, which encourages community water fluoridation.

The Board was briefed in January, 2016 about the Department's progress to update the rule per the Board's direction. Today, Clark Halvorson and Mike Means with the Office of Drinking Water have a brief presentation to update the Board on the rule making process including a summary of the comments received on the proposed rule.

Recommended Board Action:

The Board may wish to consider the following motion recommended by Department of Health:

The Board adopts the proposed revisions to WAC 246-290-460, Fluoridation of Drinking Water.

Staff Contact: David DeLong