



SBOH Authority and Considerations

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WASHINGTON STATE 
BOARD OF HEALTH

Washington State

In Washington State, decisions about whether to fluoridate public water systems are made at the local level.

RCW 70.05.060(3) authorizes local boards of health to enact rules necessary to preserve and improve public health, including whether to require fluoridation of public water systems within their jurisdiction (AGO 2008 No.5).

RCW 57.08.012 authorizes fluoridation of a water district's water by a majority vote of water district commissioners.

RCW 43.20.050 grants the Board authority to adopt rules for Group A Public Water Systems necessary to assure safe and reliable drinking water and protect the public health.

- Sets the optimal level for Group A water systems that choose to fluoridate
- Adopts the Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) to align with federal standards.

Federal Government

EPA: Sets enforceable maximum contaminant levels under the safe drinking water act.

USPHS: Recommends the optimal fluoride level; provides non-binding guidance.

FDA: Regulates fluoride in consumer products.

USDA: Tracks fluoride levels in food and beverages.



Previous Board Recommendations

In an April 2015 Workshop Report, the Board recommended strategies to improve the oral health of Washington residents, including the following:

- Health Systems
- Community Water Fluoridation
- Sealant Programs
- Interprofessional Collaboration
- Oral Health Literacy
- Surveillance
- Workforce Development



Community Water Fluoridation

From the Report:

Expand and Maintain Access to community water fluoridation for the health benefit of children, adults, and seniors

- Support communities that currently provide optimal levels of fluoride to their residents and those seeking to adopt community water fluoridation.
- Support efforts to educate and inform Washington state residents about the importance of fluoridation to improve community health.
- Engage with organizations, agencies and coalitions to promote community water fluoridation in Washington state.



Rulemaking Considerations

Panel consensus statement: Neurodevelopmental effects are associated with fluoride drinking water levels between 1.5 mg/L and the current MCLs of 4 mg/L and 2 mg/L.

Sections of Chapter 246-290 WAC relevant to the panel's recommendation are currently open for rulemaking to address PFAS.

Recommendations

- Remove the *Recommended Strategies to Improve the Oral Health of Washington Residents* (2015) document and accompanying webpage from the Board's website.
 - Work with the Department of Health to review and update the document's content and messaging.
- Direct staff to brief the Board at a future meeting regarding a potential rulemaking to consider adopting a SAL or state MCL for fluoride.

THANK YOU

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