

**From:** [Ricks, Tim DMD \(IHS/HQ\)](#)  
**To:** [Wright, Janet \(HHS/OASH\)](#)  
**Cc:** [Broido, Tara \(HHS/OASH\)](#); [Sherman, Jennifer \(HHS/OASH\)](#); [Schwartz, Erica \(HHS/OASH\)](#); [Dulaigh, Joel \(HHS/OASH\)](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Community Water Fluoridation: UPDATE 8-20-20  
**Date:** Thursday, August 20, 2020 2:30:04 PM  
**Attachments:** [Fluoride Monograph Draft 8 20 2020.pdf](#)  
[DRAFT SG FLUORIDE STATEMENT06.18.2020 v2 claen.docx](#)  
[RE Fluoridation Ask #1 Surgeon General's Statement in Support of CWF.msg](#)  
[Dr. Vivek Murthy SG Statement 2016.pdf](#)  
[Dr. Regina Benjamin SG Statement 2013.pdf](#)  
[Dr. Richard Carmona SG Statement 2004.pdf](#)  
[Dr. David Satcher SG Statement 2001.pdf](#)

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Good afternoon Dr. Wright:

Earlier today, the National Toxicology Program (NTP) provided the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (NIDCR) with an advanced copy of their revised monograph, *Systematic Review of Fluoride Exposure and Neurodevelopmental and Cognitive Health Effects*. This document should be considered pre-decisional, and NTP and NIDCR have specifically requested that “distribution be limited and restricted to those within your agencies with a need to know.” Obviously, given that I have provided briefings to all of you on this subject multiple times, I am sending you the document.

It was my understanding from our telephone conversation back on July 2<sup>nd</sup> that the Surgeon General would or should not sign a statement of support for community water fluoridation (CWF) because this monograph had not been published, and I believe that someone – maybe Tara – said that it was going to be published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)* in September (likely an excerpt and not 314 pages!). The first page of this monograph is dated September 16, 2020 and says “this current draft....is being submitted to the same NASEM review panel for an additional round of peer review.” I am not sure when this NASEM review will occur, but it doesn’t look like it has occurred yet.

However, it is important to know that the conclusion DID change slightly in its language, and it’s an important change (highlighted):

When focusing on findings from studies with exposures **in ranges typically found in the United States [e.g., approximately 0.03 to 1.5 mg/L in drinking water based on NHANES data (Jain 2017)]** that can be evaluated for dose response, effects on cognitive neurodevelopment **are inconsistent, and therefore unclear**. However, when considering all the evidence, including studies with exposures to fluoride levels higher than 1.5 mg/L in water, NTP concludes that fluoride is **presumed to be a cognitive neurodevelopmental hazard to humans**.

**With this new conclusion – that the effectiveness of fluoride on cognitive neurodevelopment are unclear in the range normally found in CWF in the U.S. – I believe it is safe for the Surgeon General to issue a statement of support.** If interested, I can modify the previous statement to include some of this specific language. For your convenience only (so you don’t have to go searching through countless e-mails), I am adding all of the relevant materials – the monograph (sorry about the 11 MB...it is 314 pages), the SG statement, the e-mail from Jennifer on 6/24 on the subject, and

the previous SG statements from 2016, 2013, 2004, and 2001.

Please let me know if you would like feedback from the CDC and NIDCR on this topic. I am in touch with both Dr. Horsford (still acting deputy director at NIDCR) and Mr. Hannan (CDC Division of Oral Health Director) on this topic. I'll respect whatever the final decision is, but I wanted to make sure I provided you with the latest information.

V/r,  
RADM Ricks

**Timothy L. Ricks, DMD, MPH, FICD**

Rear Admiral (RADM), Assistant Surgeon General  
Chief Dental Officer, U.S. Public Health Service

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**From:** Ricks, Tim DMD (IHS/HQ) <Tim.Ricks@ihs.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 12, 2020 11:08 AM  
**To:** Wright, Janet (HHS/OASH) <Janet.Wright@HHS.GOV>; Dulaigh, Joel (HHS/OASH) <Joel.Dulaigh@hhs.gov>  
**Cc:** Broido, Tara (HHS/OASH) <Tara.Broido@hhs.gov>; Sherman, Jennifer (HHS/OASH) <Jennifer.Sherman@hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: Community Water Fluoridation

Dr. Wright and CAPT Dulaigh:

As a follow-up to our phone call a month ago, I wanted to make you aware that the community water fluoridation letter of support that was shared by the 8 former USPHS chief dental officers has been widely circulated in the dental community by my immediate predecessor, RADM (Ret.) Nick Makrides. I've tried to save the many notifications, but I've seen articles and sharing from almost every major dental organization as well as several think tanks. I'm not sure if OSG has received any media questions as to why VADM Adams has not shared a statement of support for community water fluoridation, but I at least wanted to share this information for your awareness.

In addition, after speaking with both Dr. Tim Iafolla and Dr. Jonathan Horsford from NIDCR, it sounds to me that NTP/NIEHS will have their revised monograph released in September, and they're not sure if NASEM is reviewing the monograph before the NTP release in September or after the release as they did back in January (<https://www.nationalacademies.org/our-work/peer-review-of-the-ntp-monograph-on-systematic-review-of-fluoride-exposure-and-neurodevelopmental-and-cognitive-health-effects#sectionCommittee>). As you can see from that report, NASEM came down pretty hard on the methodology of the first draft of the monograph, but we can wait and see how they view the second draft.

I will revisit this issue with you as soon as I see the NTP release of the revised monograph.

V/r,

RADM Ricks

**Timothy L. Ricks, DMD, MPH, FICD**

Rear Admiral (RADM), Assistant Surgeon General  
Chief Dental Officer, U.S. Public Health Service

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**From:** Wright, Janet (HHS/OASH) <[Janet.Wright@HHS.GOV](mailto:Janet.Wright@HHS.GOV)>  
**Sent:** Sunday, July 12, 2020 8:25 PM  
**To:** Ricks, Tim DMD (IHS/HQ) <[Tim.Ricks@ihs.gov](mailto:Tim.Ricks@ihs.gov)>; Dulaigh, Joel (HHS/OASH) <[Joel.Dulaigh@hhs.gov](mailto:Joel.Dulaigh@hhs.gov)>  
**Cc:** Broido, Tara (HHS/OASH) <[Tara.Broido@hhs.gov](mailto:Tara.Broido@hhs.gov)>; Sherman, Jennifer (HHS/OASH) <[Jennifer.Sherman@hhs.gov](mailto:Jennifer.Sherman@hhs.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: Community Water Fluoridation

Thank you, RADM Ricks.

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**From:** Ricks, Tim DMD (IHS/HQ) <[Tim.Ricks@ihs.gov](mailto:Tim.Ricks@ihs.gov)>  
**Sent:** Friday, July 10, 2020 2:06 PM  
**To:** Wright, Janet (HHS/OASH) <[Janet.Wright@HHS.GOV](mailto:Janet.Wright@HHS.GOV)>; Dulaigh, Joel (HHS/OASH) <[Joel.Dulaigh@hhs.gov](mailto:Joel.Dulaigh@hhs.gov)>  
**Cc:** Broido, Tara (HHS/OASH) <[Tara.Broido@hhs.gov](mailto:Tara.Broido@hhs.gov)>; Sherman, Jennifer (HHS/OASH) <[Jennifer.Sherman@hhs.gov](mailto:Jennifer.Sherman@hhs.gov)>  
**Subject:** FW: Community Water Fluoridation

Good afternoon Dr. Wright and CAPT Dulaigh,

For your situational awareness, please see the attached letter written by the eight living former USPHS chief dental officers and distributed to the American Dental Association and perhaps other organizations.

RADM Ricks

**Timothy L. Ricks, DMD, MPH, FICD**

Rear Admiral (RADM), Assistant Surgeon General  
Chief Dental Officer, U.S. Public Health Service  
IHS Headquarters Division of Oral Health

- Continuing Dental Education Coordinator
- Oral Health Promotion/Disease Prevention Coordinator
- Expanded Function Dental Assistant Program Coordinator
- Dental Lead, Government Performance and Results Act
- Oral Health Surveillance Coordinator

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**From:** Nick Makrides (b) (6) >  
**Sent:** Friday, July 10, 2020 12:51 PM

**To:** [oloughlink@ada.org](mailto:oloughlink@ada.org); Steven P. Geiermann <[geiermanns@ada.org](mailto:geiermanns@ada.org)>; Jane Grover <[groverj@ada.org](mailto:groverj@ada.org)>; [burnsr@ada.org](mailto:burnsr@ada.org); [Zokaiet@ada.org](mailto:Zokaiet@ada.org); [gehanic@ada.org](mailto:gehanic@ada.org); [klemmedson@ada.org](mailto:klemmedson@ada.org)  
**Cc:** Ricks, Tim DMD (IHS/HQ) <[Tim.Ricks@ihs.gov](mailto:Tim.Ricks@ihs.gov)>  
**Subject:** Community Water Fluoridation

Dear Friends at ADA,

In commemoration of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of community water fluoridation, the former chief dental officers of the United States Public Health Service, are reaffirming our support of CWF. I have attached a letter with our signatures. Please feel free to use this document in the furtherance of what we believe is one of the greatest public health achievements of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Best Personal Regards,

Nicholas Makrides DMD, MA, MPH  
RADM, United States Public Health Service (Ret)