The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
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April 28, 2015

Dear Local Board of Health Official,

This letter is to inform you of updated recommendations regarding Community Water Fluoridation issued April 27, 2015 from the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

Following a multi-year review, HHS has updated their recommendations for optimal water fluoridation from the range of 0.7 parts per million up to a maximum of 1.2 ppm to a single standard of 0.7 ppm. HHS recommends continuing the practice of community water fluoridation at this level as a safe and effective means for the reduction of dental decay.

This change is made to standardize the recommended levels across the country and takes into account two facts:

1. People in different climates of the U.S. drink roughly the same amount of water.

2. More sources of fluoride are available now than when the recommendations were first made in the 1960s.

Tooth decay is the most common chronic disease our children experience nationally. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found that in communities that initiated fluoridation, the decrease in childhood decay was almost 30 percent over 3-12 years of follow-up, leading the CDC to name community water fluoridation one of 10 great public health achievements of the 20th century. Additionally, for every dollar spent on community water fluoridation, up to $38 is saved in treatment costs for tooth decay.

To this end, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health strongly supports community water fluoridation as a safe, cost effective, and proven practice that promotes good oral health within our communities. DPH also supports the use of fluoride mouth

rinse and tablets where a community does not currently have a public fluoridated water system.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Heather Benabbou, Fluoridation Coordinator in the Office of Oral Health at Heather.Benabbou@state.ma.us

Sincerely,

Monica Bharel, MD, MPH
Commissioner