Our Mission:
The Pew Children’s Dental Campaign strives for cost-effective policies that will mean millions more children get the basic dental care they need to grow, learn and lead healthy lives.

February 11, 2014
Pew’s Approach

GOAL

RESEARCH

STATE ADVOCACY

FEDERAL ADVOCACY

CONVENING

PARTNERSHIPS

COMMS SUPPORT

February 11, 2014
Tooth decay remains the most common chronic childhood disease
Tooth decay is expensive to treat

- Average annual dental expenditures for privately insured individuals:
  - 0-20 years old: $358
  - 21-64 years old: $582

- Preventable dental conditions were the primary diagnosis in 830,000+ visits to hospital ERs nationwide in 2009 — a 16% increase from 2006.
Tooth decay is expensive to treat

A person could spend more than $6,000 over a lifetime to deal with the consequences of a cavity in just one molar.
Good news:
Tooth decay is now preventable
What is Fluoridation?

Fluoridation is the **adjustment of the fluoride** in drinking water to the optimal level for reducing tooth decay.
Fluoridation is Effective

Fluoridation reduces tooth decay about 25%
U.S. Task Force on Community Preventive Services strongly recommends CWF

- Updated April 2013
Fluoridation is Safe

1951
- National Research Council
  Fluoridation is safe and effective

1970
- Library of Congress
  Fluoridation continues to demonstrate efficacy and safety

1977
- Wisconsin Department of Health
  After 25 years of fluoridation, decay declined almost 50%

1991
- U.S. Public Health Service
  “The benefits of water fluoridation are still clearly evident.”

1995
- Illinois study
  Fluoridation is “the dominant factor” in the decline of cavities

2006
- World Health Organization
  No evidence linking fluoridated water to cancer
Fluoridation is Equitable
Every $1 invested in water fluoridation

Saves $38 in unnecessary dental costs
Fluoridation Still Matters
US Fluoridation Rate

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80%

Community Water Fluoridation: The Top 10 and Bottom 10

The percentage of residents served by public water systems in each state who are receiving fluoridated water.

72 million Americans who are served by public water systems lack access to fluoridated drinking water.

The CDC has recognized water fluoridation as one of “10 great public health achievements of the 20th century.”

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1 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “2012 Water Fluoridation Statistic.” Data covers only residents whose homes are connected to public water systems.

Despite progress, much work remains

**About a third** of Americans still don’t have access to fluoridated water
What are we up against?
Organized anti-fluoride activists

- Coalition of far left and far right
- Relatively small group with strong internet presence
- Distort research
- Misrepresent others’ views
- Ignore scientific evidence
- Spread fear and misinformation
Top 5 Fluoride Myths (and why they are false)

Myth #1: Fluoride causes adverse health effects
Myth #2: Fluoride is a dangerous chemical
Myth #3: Fluoridation is an illegal infringement on our civil liberties
Myth #4: Dental fluorosis is a serious health condition
Myth #5: Fluoride dose vs. fluoridation level
Myth #1: Fluoride causes adverse health effects

Anti-fluoride activists make many claims of adverse health effects:

- Kidney disease
- Down syndrome
- Cancer
- Reduces IQ
- Fractures
- Diabetes
- Alzheimer’s disease
- Thyroid disease
- Reduced cognitive function
- Infertility
- Acute Toxicity
- Cardiovascular disease
- Immune disorders
- Skeletal Fluorosis
- Arthritis
- Endocrine disruption
- Osteoporosis
- Fractures
- Diabetes
- Reduces IQ
- Alzheimer’s disease
- Thyroid disease
- Reduced cognitive function
- Infertility
- Acute Toxicity
- Cardiovascular disease
- Immune disorders
- Skeletal Fluorosis
- Arthritis
- Endocrine disruption
- Osteoporosis
Fact: These claims are unfounded

- Studies have repeatedly investigated potential adverse health impacts of fluoridation
- This research has found no evidence of a link between fluoride and any major negative health outcome
No widely respected medical and health organizations oppose fluoridation.
Myth #2: Fluoride is a dangerous chemical
Fact: Fluoride is a natural mineral that improves health.

Fact: Fluoride is one of many natural byproducts that improve quality of life and health.
Myth #3: Fluoridation is an illegal infringement on our civil liberties
Fact: Courts have settled this issue

Issues that have been addressed:

• Legality of police power to fluoridate
• Freedom from forced or mass medication
• Privacy
• Unauthorized practice of medicine, dentistry and pharmacy
• Pure water relating to the safety and health effects of community water fluoridation

Ruling: CWF is legal and within a community’s right to protect its residents’ health
Fact: Dental fluorosis is a cosmetic, harmless condition.

Dental Fluorosis (severe)  

Dental Fluorosis (mild)
Myth #5: Fluoride Dose vs. Level

Opponents claim: Fluoridation is dangerous because we cannot control the "dose" of fluoride received when drinking water.

Fact: Fluoride levels in water are controlled to the optimal level to protect everyone's health. The fluoride received when drinking water is within safe levels.