

No. 2. Winter 2005

To: State Water Fluoridation Programs, State Dental Directors, State Drinking Water Programs

Subject: Program Update—CDC Community Water Fluoridation

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Community Water Fluoridation (CWF) Program is part of the Division of Oral Health in CDC's National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. The CWF Program periodically issues this update on program activities and resources for water fluoridation specialists, engineers with state drinking water programs, and state oral health officials. Please feel free to forward this communication to any staff member or anyone else who you feel would benefit from it.

60th Anniversary of Community Water Fluoridation

CDC named water fluoridation as one of 10 great public health achievements of the 20th century, and this year marks the 60th anniversary of community water fluoridation, which began in Grand Rapids, Michigan, on January 25, 1945. To recognize and celebrate the contribution water fluoridation has made to health, the American Dental Association and CDC will cosponsor a water fluoridation symposium on July 14-15, 2005. Sixty years of research has unquestionably demonstrated that water fluoridation is a safe and effective means of preventing tooth decay, and that it is a public health bargain. On average, every dollar spent on water fluoridation saves approximately \$38 in avoided dental costs. Typically, fluoridation costs less than one-percent of a standard water utility bill, based on costs in the 2004 American Water Works Association–Raftelis Survey. This is a great time to remind water plant operators, community leaders, and health practitioners in your state that water fluoridation is an extremely effective means of preventing tooth decay. Be sure to mention that water fluoridation benefits people of all ages. What was the date the first city in your state began adjusting fluoride to the level optimum for decay prevention?

Water Fluoridation Poster

CDC has prepared a poster about operating fluoridation systems for operators of water treatment facilities. The poster is being customized with specific information for each state. The American Water Works Association, the National Rural Water Association, and the Association of State and Territorial Dental Directors all provided useful suggestions for the content of the poster, and all are our partners in this effort. CDC is expecting to distribute the posters to state water fluoridation programs during March 2005.

Water Fluoridation Reporting System

The Water Fluoridation Reporting System (WFRS) is a management tool for state fluoridation programs. Questions about WFRS should be directed to the WFRS help desk, which can be accessed by clicking the “Contact Us” button on the WFRS web site at <http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/WFRS/default.htm>). If you are interested in increasing your use of this valuable tool, CDC is ready to assist you.

2004 Fluoridation Quality Awards

The 2003 CDC Fluoridation Quality Awards for individual systems, which were delayed as a result of personnel transition, are now being processed, and the award certificates will be sent to state water program administrators. Start preparing now for the 2004 awards by ensuring that you have entered all your 2004 monthly data into WFRS by March 25, 2005. We expect to present 2004 state level awards during the National Oral Health Conference in Pittsburgh in early May. Award certificates for individual systems will be sent to state dental directors in June 2005.

Updating System and Population Data for the 2004 Fluoridation Census

As part of its efforts to gather data for the 2004 Water Fluoridation Census, CDC will be sending instructions to state fluoridation programs on how to provide WFRS with updated population and community water system association data. This census will include a state-by-state report of the percentage of a state’s population served by community water systems who receive fluoridated water. The last fluoridation census was for the 2002 period.

Proficiency Testing

The CDC Proficiency Testing (PT) Program is a quality assurance program that state laboratories can use to verify that they are analyzing water fluoridation samples correctly. The monthly program begins with CDC preparing analytical standards that are sent to both reference and participating laboratories for analysis. The reference and participating laboratories provide the results of their analyses to CDC. CDC then compares the results from participating laboratories with the “gold standard” established by the reference laboratories, and sends the result of this comparison to the participating laboratories. CDC has initiated an assessment of the organization of the PT Program in order to determine whether the program is meeting the needs of state fluoridation programs, how the PT Program compares with accepted standards in proficiency testing, and what documentation and reporting should be provided to participating and reference laboratories.

Annual Water Fluoridation Training: Principles and Practices of Community Water Fluoridation

In November 2004, CDC sponsored a course on basic community water fluoridation entitled *Water Fluoridation: Principles and Practices*. The course will next be conducted at the Murfreesboro, Tennessee, training facility during the week of October

24-28, 2005. The course is intended to build the skills needed to manage and operate a state water fluoridation program, and to introduce participants to fluoridation engineering principles. The course has been revised and updated and now is conducted over three days rather than four days. Training at the Sacramento, California, training center will not be held in 2005 because of construction at that location.

CDC has received several requests to provide an advanced engineering course on water fluoridation. It has been several years since CDC last provided such a course. We are evaluating the possibility of providing this course as well as determining what its content might be. If you have suggestions for issues you feel should be included in an advanced engineering course, please contact us at OralHealth@cdc.gov.

Please Contact us with Questions or Comments

If you have questions or require assistance regarding community water fluoridation, please contact a member of our fluoridation team at OralHealth@cdc.gov

You can also visit us on the Internet at www.cdc.gov/OralHealth/index.htm