

ASTDD Fluorides Committee Annual Report
Jan 1, 2023 – Dec 31, 2023

Chair: Bruce Austin (OR) Consultant: Judy Feinstein

Members: Tracy Boehmer (CDC), Richard Crask (KY)*, Aimee Duval-Critser (ID)*, Geri Edrei (FL)*, Emily Firman (WA)*, Emily Horney (NC), Julie Janssen (IL), Johnny Johnson (FL), Dustin Jurgenson (VT), Jay Kumar (CA), Jennifer Lansing (CO), Elizabeth Lense (ADA)*, Dixianne Parker (GA), Becky Parnian (NJ)*, Nicole Payonk (PA), Howard Pollick (CA), Karen Raju (CA)*, John Rudolph (KY)*, Gina Sharps (WV)*, Gwen Sullentrup (MO), Sandy Sutton (MI), Matt Zaborowski (ADA)*, Tooka Zokaie (CA)

* These individuals were members for part of the year.

1. List any new members or subcommittee members: Richard Crask, Geri Edrei, Emily Firman, Becky Parnian, Elizabeth (Liz) Lense, Karen Raju and John Rudolph joined the committee in 2023.

2. Describe the purpose of your committee:

The Fluorides Committee provides support to ASTDD members with the partnerships, policies and guidelines needed for the appropriate use of fluorides in community/population-based programs designed for dental caries prevention. The Committee works to assure that ASTDD positions and policies are presented in all appropriate venues, and oversees, reviews or provides input for activities that ASTDD may be involved in regarding fluorides; in addition, technical support is provided as needed to state dental directors and fluoridation contacts. The Committee also coordinates annual fluoridation awards in collaboration with ADA and CDC at ASTDD's Annual Meeting.

3. List your committee accomplishments for the last calendar year.

- The Fluorides Committee met eleven times during 2023.
- The annual Fluoridation Awards were identified in collaboration with state dental directors and the ADA, and announced during ASTDD's Awards Ceremony, held at the NOHC on April 16 in Orlando, FL. Achievements in 2022 were recognized in four categories, along with the 2023 Fluoridation Merit Award. [Details](#) may be viewed via the Fluoride Committee's webpage.
 - 50 years of fluoridation (106 individual awards among 26 states; Minnesota had 19 communities, Ohio had 15, and Illinois had 14). One community, Evanston, Illinois, was recognized for fluoridating for 75 years.
 - Other awards presented were for state fluoridation quality, recognizing four states for consistency in maintaining optimally fluoridated water in over 90% of the adjusted water systems or population supplied by adjusted water systems; successful fluoridation reaffirmations in seven communities in four states, where challenges to community water fluoridation were defeated; and one Community Initiative Award, recognizing municipal action to implement fluoridation.
 - The 2023 Fluoridation Special Merit Award was presented to Ms. Gwen Sullentrup, Community Water Fluoridation and Dental Sealant Coordinator with the Office of Dental Health in the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services. The award recognized Gwen's commitment and leadership in initiatives across Missouri to establish a successful approach to fluoridation. She has developed several innovative efforts and is leading the

- process at the local level to increase the percentage of Missouri residents receiving optimal fluoride levels.
- State dental directors again received a toolkit (by email) including templates and instructions for award certificates along with sample cover letters and media release materials with ideas for recognizing awardees as a way to promote increased recognition and/or media coverage.
 - Provided our annual report on ASTDD fluoridation activities (June 2022 to March 2022) to the National Fluoridation Advisory Committee (NFAC), an advisory committee of ADA’s Council on Advocacy for Access and Prevention (CAAP), during its March meeting in Washington DC. Judy Feinstein participated in the meeting on site as did Fluorides Committee members Jay Kumar and Johnny Johnson. Dr. Kumar and Dr. Howard Pollick, who attended virtually, also serve on NFAC.
 - Updated ASTDD’s talking points and guidance for responding to the NTP report (March).
 - On behalf of the Committee, Judy Feinstein continued to coordinate the CWF Community of Practice (CoP) for the 20 states funded by the CDC’s Division of Oral Health and promoted the use of a dedicated listserv for the grantees. There were just two webinars during the year; following a decision the previous year, these sessions were open to fluoridation coordinators and others working with fluoridation in all states and to the Fluorides Committee, which had been done occasionally in the past. The webinars were well-attended and interactive.
 - The January session featured Robin Miller, Vermont’s Oral Health Director, and Dustin Jurgenson, Fluoridation Coordinator, who reported on their experience in VT when a water operator intentionally under-fluoridated for years. The session also included discussion of ASTDD developing a “tip sheet” for talking points on fluoride additive shortages and notification language when CWF is stopped, regardless of the reason. (See below.)
 - May’s session featured Gwen Sullentrup from Missouri, who described the checklist approach she uses when working with communities dealing with challenges to water fluoridation as well as in efforts to initiate; and Johnny Johnson, American Fluoridation Society, who gave an overview of the 2023 NOHC presentation, “Are Your Water Systems Properly Fluoridating?” The session also reviewed newer ASTDD resources as well as the function and use of this Community of Practice and ASTDD’s fluoridation-focused listservs.
 - Also on behalf of the Committee, Judy represents ASTDD with an informal group of states that have met from time to time to discuss general water fluoridation concerns; discussion has touched on operator training, messaging when confronting rollbacks, and other issues. The problems are not unique to each state and system although they may present that way; looking at the commonalities may be helpful in resolving them. A smaller group also meets, focusing on problem-solving issues identified in implementing tablet system projects. Everyone continues to believe the system can work.
 - Judy and Julie Janssen started drafting an “umbrella” document on fluoride modalities, which will be presented as an issue brief rather than as a policy statement. A small workgroup was established to work with them.
 - The Committee revised its 2016 fact sheet, Naturally Occurring Fluoride in Drinking Water, updated the state Fluoridation Fact Sheet Template, updated the 2017 Silver Diamine Fluoride fact sheet, and with assistance from Virginia Health Catalyst, created a new resource, *Communicating About Water Fluoridation Disruptions: A Tip Sheet for State Oral Health Programs, Community Water Systems, and State and Rural Water Associations*. Judy also compiled a list of community water fluoridation one-pagers that states can use as templates, following a suggestion from the March NFAC meeting.

- Following a request from one state about what others do to promote the receipt of CDC quality awards to local public water systems, Judy posted a query to the “CDC-funded” and general CWF listservs; the responses were compiled and posted back to those lists.
- We continued our use of Curate, a data-mining company that provides a searchable database of local government meeting agendas and minutes and scans meeting minutes, agendas, planning documents, etc., from local government entities. ASTDD shares a subscription with the American Fluoridation Society. We continued using an enhanced and more comprehensive version to which we upgraded in November 2021.
 - Reports combining Curate findings with postings from Google Alerts are sent at least once but more often twice a month to state dental directors, state fluoridation contacts, the Fluorides Committee, ANOHC, and AAP’s Fluoride Responders listservs. These reports can serve as an early warning system on fluoridation-related activity. If either tool picks up something with more immediacy, emails are sent to individual dental directors and sometimes state fluoridation contacts (emails were sent to contacts in OK, MI, MO, WV, VT, MA, MD, NY, PA, UT, IA, OH, OR, WA, TX, FL, NC, AL and WI in 2023). In several instances, the Curate post or Google Alert has provided the first notice for a state oral health program of a fluoridation discussion scheduled for a public meeting and allowed the SOHP to be better prepared. Feedback on this service continues to be positive.
 - The posts are recorded on a spreadsheet and maintained cumulatively, thus providing an ongoing resource and record of activity. Currently, this function replaces the “Fluoridation Rollback Catalog” that had been posted on the ASTDD website; options for other ways to track activity are being explored.
- In collaboration with the American Fluoridation Society, the Committee co-sponsored a preconference workshop at the 2023 NOHC, titled *Using Targeted Briefings to Strengthen Partners' Knowledge of Water Fluoridation*.
- TA/Consultation was provided during the year as follows (email unless otherwise noted):
 - AFS: provided additional history, background and links regarding suspension of fluoridation in Buffalo, to assist in TA that AFS is providing to CWF advocates there.
 - AZ: provided SDD with introductions to contacts working on CWF mapping
 - CO: responded to questions about SDF and the 2023 NOHC workshop on CWF, provided assistance in accessing partner website materials and provided resources for CWF regulations in other states.
 - KY: phone call to discuss potential legislative changes, following up on previous call; clarification of fluoridation awards.
 - MA: responded to questions about WFRS and other issues.
 - ND: education resources for water operators.
 - OK: provided materials (PowerPoints) on messaging.
 - RI: Provided feedback on a draft “fact sheet” type document.
 - VA: Virginia Health Catalyst regarding state fluoridation plans.
 - Washington, DC: clarification of fluoridation awards for the Oral Health Program.
 - WV: suggestions for following up on potential challenge.

Committee members also provided assistance throughout the year, e.g., Johnny Johnson, who continues to provide support to states facing CWF challenges.

4. Describe the future activities planned by your committee:

- Continue to serve as resource, as a group and/or individually, to the CDC-funded states in their work toward CWF objectives, through the established Community of Practice and listserv for state fluoridation contacts, as well as to all states and territories.

- Complete review and revision of older fluorides resource documents, working with Julie Janssen and other committee members. Note that these revisions have been considerably delayed due to capacity issues but also because of the delay in the release of the NTP report out of concern that it would have a substantial impact on our documents.
- Continue to collaborate with partners (e.g., ADA, AFS, AAP, AAPHD) to identify fluoride advocacy opportunities.
- Develop and maintain regular communication with ADA for fluoride issues, e.g., monitoring state/local activities (local actions, referenda), public outreach, etc.
- Continue to work as requested with ASTDD evaluators to evaluate CDC-grant-funded fluoridation activities, particularly the Community of Practice.
- Ongoing assessment of our use of Curate to keep informed of fluoridation-related activity at the municipal level, along with Google Alerts. Develop a report on cumulative activity based on these data that more clearly reflects rollback attempts and outcomes as well as successful initiatives to implement CWF.

5. Describe any subcommittees your committee uses, their roles and activities:

There are occasional ad hoc subcommittees that are identified to assist in particular activities, such as a document review process.

6. List any unmet needs of your committee (e.g., members, funding, etc.):

None anticipated.