



Dental Public Health Activity Descriptive Summary

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California Water Fluoridation

California's AB 733, signed into law in 1995, requires all public water systems with 10,000 service connections to fluoridate their systems once funds have been provided. This law charged the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) to secure the necessary funds, develop regulations to enforce the law and provide the necessary scientific information and support to the public. No State funds were provided for this directive. In order to implement the law and secure funds, the CDPH formed a workgroup representing public/private partners from the oral health community/political/financial power bases. The Workgroup consisted of representatives from the California Dental Association, the Center for Oral Health (formerly the Dental Health Foundation), the California Fluoridation Task Force, and CDPH Division of Chronic Disease and Injury Control, Oral Health Unit, and Division of Drinking Water and Environmental Management.

During the initial stages, the workgroup received an award of \$15 million dollars from the California Endowment to fluoridate priority communities and water districts. In order to facilitate the administration of the fluoridation funding, the Workgroup, the California Fluoridation Task Force, CDPH, and local community advocates worked collaboratively to develop a strategic plan to implement water fluoridation in priority areas, and to develop or revise local and state fluoridation policies to support the implementation of water fluoridation. The Workgroup merged efforts with the California Fluoridation Task Force, the California Fluoridation Advisory Council (CFAC) and now works within the CFAC to maximize resources. The Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant from CDC provides funding to sustain 1.0 FTE in the CDPH Oral Health Unit as well as supports a contract with the University of California San Francisco, School of Dentistry (UCSF) to provide technical expertise to support water fluoridation activities in the state. Technical assistance is provided to local public health departments, water purveyors, policymakers, health providers, other state departments, and the general public regarding fluoridation planning, policy, and implementation. In addition, the program provides testimony to state and local governments, water districts and other interested parties. Another key area has been the collaboration with the California Dental Association Foundation (administrators for the California Endowment funding) and other organizations such as local First 5 Commissions to identify funding resources for fluoridation.

Community water fluoridation in the state has increased from 17% in 1995 to 62% in 2010. This accomplishment is a direct result of the public/private partnership with key partners, funders, and local health departments, providers, advocates, coalitions, policymakers, and water systems/purveyors as well as coordination and collaboration within CDPH between the Oral Health Unit and the Division of Drinking Water and Environmental Management.

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