

*Submitted on February 19, 2014, to the
Health and Human Services Committee
Kansas House of Representatives*

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB 2372, a bill mandating community water systems to distribute misinformation about fluoridation to water consumers. As health foundations serving Kansas, collectively we grant tens of millions annually to improve access to health care for underserved people. Therefore, we have an interest in seeing that public health measures such as water fluoridation are in place to build the general health of Kansas citizens. If passed, HB 2372 would seriously undermine the state's responsibility to "promote and protect health and prevent disease and injury among the people of Kansas."¹ The bill is based on blatant falsehoods and junk science and requires communities to raise undue alarm among Kansans' families.

Optimally fluoridated water reduces tooth decay about 25 percent over a person's lifetime.² Named one of the Ten Great Public Health Achievements of the 20th Century by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention³, this public health practice is safe, effective, and backed by nearly 70 years of scientific investigation. Former U.S. Surgeon General David Satcher, MD PhD, who authored the 2000 report *Oral Health in America: A Report of the Surgeon General*, called community water fluoridation "the most cost-effective, practical and safe means for reducing and controlling the occurrence of tooth decay in a community."⁴

We consistently direct our foundations' resources toward the most vulnerable Kansans. Incidentally, this is also the population most helped by optimally fluoridated community water systems. For some, this is the only form of oral health prevention they get, as they do not have access to regular dental care. We encourage you to remember these vulnerable populations in families with limited resources, residents of long term care facilities, persons with disabilities and rural residents with limited access to dentists as you debate this bill.

¹ "Our Mission," Kansas Department of Public Health and Environment, Division of Public Health. January 29, 2014. http://www.kdheks.gov/health/our_mission.html

² "Fluoridation Basics," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. July 25, 2013, <http://www.cdc.gov/fluoridation/basics/>

³ "Achievements in Public Health, 1900-1999: Fluoridation of Drinking Water to Prevent Dental Caries," *MMWR Weekly*, October 22, 1999. CDC.

<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm4841a1.htm>

⁴ Surgeon General's Statement on Community Water Fluoridation. CDC. July 10, 2013. <http://www.cdc.gov/fluoridation/factsheets/sg01.htm>

It is also worth highlighting the cost effectiveness of fluoridation. Every \$1 spent on water fluoridation saves \$38 in dental treatment costs.⁵ The cost of fluoridation typically falls to each community's water management entity—supported by local public funds. The cost savings goes right back to the community, in the form of lower dental bills for families, employers that provide dental insurance, and the state, in the form of lower KanCare costs. Optimal water fluoridation prevents tooth decay, which allows us to direct resources toward other health conditions affecting Kansans.

We are proud to work toward the betterment of Kansas, as we know you are, too. Your opposition to HB 2372 will be continuing evidence of the commitment of the State of Kansas to the health of its citizens.



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⁵ "Cost Savings of Community Water Fluoridation." CDC. July 10, 2013.
<http://www.cdc.gov/fluoridation/factsheets/cost.htm>