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Healthy People Build Strong Communities

**House Committee on Health and Human Services
Testimony on HB2372
Relating to disclosures regarding fluoride in water supplies
February 5, 2014**

Chair Crum and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding HB2372.

Public health focuses on population health, prevention, environmental health, and improving health outcomes. One of the 10 essential services of public health is to inform, educate, and empower people about health issues.

To that end, the National Association of County and City Health Officials has stated that “Fluoride is a naturally occurring element, and adjusting the fluoride content of community water supplies is the single most effective and safe public health measure to prevent tooth decay and to improve oral health throughout one’s lifespan. Community water fluoridation is a public health measure that benefits individuals of all ages and socioeconomic groups, especially those without access to regular dental care.”¹

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention describe fluoridation of drinking water as one of the ten great public health achievements of the 20th century and the single most effective public health measure to improve oral health.

Water fluoridation has been repeatedly studied and scientifically verified to be safe. Since at least 1982, U.S. Surgeon Generals, who are tasked with providing the public with the best scientific evidence to improve their health, have consistently issued statements in support of fluoridated community water supplies as a safe and effective means to prevent tooth decay. A *2001 Surgeon General's Statement on Community Water Fluoridation* states, “More than 50 years of scientific research has found that people living in communities with fluoridated water have healthier teeth and fewer cavities than those living where the water is not fluoridated.”

Recent studies citing the potential for community water fluoridation to reduce IQ scores in children have been criticized as flawed in scientific design and as not applicable to the actual fluoridation practice in the United States.

Public health policy should be based on sound scientific study, which does not support the theory that community water fluoridation in the United States is unsafe.

Michelle Ponce
KALHD Executive Director

¹ NACCHO Statement of Policy: Community Water Fluoridation

The Kansas Association of Local Health Departments (KALHD) is a nonprofit association dedicated to strengthening local health departments for the purpose of improving and protecting the health of all Kansans. KALHD’s membership consists of 99 of the 100 local health departments in Kansas