



TESTIMONY HB2372
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
January 30, 2014

The Kansas Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics represents over 90% of the pediatricians in this state. We provide testimony today to urge you to vote against the advancement of House Bill No. 2372.

Cavities in children are a public health crisis. It is the most common childhood disease, and often goes undiagnosed for many years. It is five times more common than asthma and seven times more common than hay fever in children ages 5 to 17 years old. Cavities are **100% preventable**. As a physician, I have seen first-hand the devastating effects on the health of children. They lead to chronic pain, poor nutrition, speech disturbances, systemic illnesses, and low self-esteem. A bill that does not support community fluoridated water would add to the growing crisis of tooth decay, increase healthcare costs, and be detrimental to the overall health and well-being of Kansas children.

In my own clinic, I have seen how cavities can impact on the lives of families. I have a patient who is so ashamed of her teeth that she never smiles. I have parents who have to decide between paying bills or their child's oral surgery, which can cost upwards of \$10,000. I have patients who live in chronic pain from cavities and tooth abscesses until they can see a dentist. With improvement in oral health screening, access to dental care and fluorinated water - these stories are fewer and fewer.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention has cited community water fluoridation as one of the 10 greatest public health achievements of the 20th century. House Bill No. 2372 would have you believe otherwise. There have been over 65 years of experience and countless studies that have shown that fluoride is both **safe and cost-effective** in preventing cavities. Fluoride prevents at least 25% of cavities in children and adults over their lifespan. One dental filling cost more than a lifetime of fluoridated water for one person. For most cities, **every dollar invested in water fluoridation saves \$38** in dental treatment cost per person. The American Dental Association supports community fluoridation as the single most effective public health measure to prevent tooth decay. They are joined by the American Academy of Pediatrics, the U.S Center for Disease Control and Prevention,

the World Health Organization and over 100 other national and international groups in support for community fluoridated water.

Pediatricians across the state of Kansas ask you not to advance House Bill No. 2372 and promote fluoride as a safe and cost-effective health measure against the devastating effects of cavities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink on a light yellow background. The signature reads "Thuylinh N. Pham MD".

Thuylinh N. Pham, MD
Chapter Oral Health Advocate
American Academy of Pediatrics – Kansas