

Good Afternoon,

My name is Kelly Fuchs and I am a Senior Health Educator with the Oral Health Program for the Saskatchewan Health Authority Regina Urban area (former Regina Qu Appelle Health Region). The implementation of fluoridation of the municipal water system in Regina would provide all residents, especially our most vulnerable, with an effective and equitable approach to helping prevent dental decay.ⁱ

In all communities and neighbourhoods we see children with mouths full of cavities and abscesses, living with pain which has been left unattended – in many cases for years. Due to their debilitating oral health, these children suffer due to poor nourishment (cannot chew food) and lack of sleep due to the pain that they are experiencing in their mouths. Poor oral health can result in inadequate nutrition resulting in poor brain function and potentially many missed days of school. Many of these children will end up having their dental treatment completed before the age of 5 in the hospital, under general anesthetic. Children under the age of 5 going to the hospital for general anesthetic, many have all of their teeth extracted or restored with numerous crowns and nerve treatments; many families cannot afford the dental treatment so the children continue to suffer. Small children awaken from surgery in pain and often are left without any teeth until their permanent teeth erupt. Poor self-esteem, speech difficulties and crowded teeth are issues that follow. A 2011-12 report from the Canadian Institute of Health Information shows the former Regina Qu Appelle Health Region accounted for 317 surgeries in Saskatchewan for children under 5 years of age suffering with Early Childhood Caries.ⁱⁱ This does not take into account the surgeries also performed in private clinics in Regina.

Older adults and seniors experience similar cavity experiences. Adults are keeping their teeth longer and the majority are keeping them for life. This increased retention of teeth means more adults are at risk for cavities. More residents are going into LTC with their natural teeth and with extensive dental work such as crown, bridges and implants. These adults have maintained their oral health over the decades with many investing thousands of dollars for good oral health. They too would benefit greatly from the additional fluoride.

Tooth decay can negatively affect an individual's quality of life and ability to thrive. Tooth decay can cause pain and infection. Water fluoridation has been

around and safely used since the 1940's. Community water fluoridation protects the oral and overall health of communities. It is simple...Cavities are preventable and fluoridation prevents cavities...this makes fluoridation a wise choice in support of Healthy People, Health Saskatchewan.

Sincerely,

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ⁱ Canadian Dental Association Position Statement, 2017.

ⁱⁱ Canadian Institute for Health Information. Treatment of Preventable Dental Cavities in Preschoolers: A Focus on Day Surgery Under General Anesthesia; 2013.