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Oral Health Groups Applaud Denver Water Board's Decision to Stay the Course on Fluoridation

DENVER—The Colorado Dental Association, Delta Dental of Colorado Foundation and Oral Health Colorado today issued the following statements on the Denver Water board's decision to continue optimal fluoridation of the system's water. Fluoridated drinking water is proven to reduce and prevent tooth decay.

"As the largest water provider in Colorado, serving more than 1.3 million people in the city of Denver and surrounding suburbs, Denver Water sets the standard for water quality and policies for our state," said Dr. Brett Kessler. Kessler, a dentist who practices and lives in Denver, was part of a panel in July that provided presentations to the authority's board.

"We appreciate the commitment shown by the board and staff of Denver Water to study this issue. Each board member received large amounts of scientific and health information, public comments and other materials throughout this process," Kessler said. "The board clearly made the right decision in the interest of our community's public health to continue fluoridating our water according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's guidelines and in line with demonstrated scientific and health research."

Kessler made the presentation to the board alongside oral health experts Dr. William Bailey of the University of Colorado's School of Dental Medicine and Dr. Katya Mauritson, dental director and Oral Health Program manager at the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment.

"At the non-profit Delta Dental of Colorado Foundation, our grants and programs focus on eradicating the number one chronic disease of childhood—tooth decay," said executive director Barbara Springer. "While toothpaste and mouth rinses contain fluoride, it's often not quite enough to prevent tooth decay. That's why fluoridated water is so important—it provides an extra level of protection against a completely preventable disease. Community water fluoridation is especially critical for children who lack regular access to preventive dental care. In many respects, it's the last line of defense against tooth decay for many Colorado kids.

“We thank the many people and organizations who have voiced their support for community water fluoridation in recent weeks. We applaud the Denver Water commissioners for their thoughtful consideration of this important policy, and for upholding an evidence-based practice that directly benefits all of us,” Springer added.

“Fluoride is already naturally present in Denver Water’s sources. Community water fluoridation, especially in Denver Water’s case, is simply the adjustment of fluoride that occurs naturally to a recommended level for preventing tooth decay,” said Deborah Foote, executive director of Oral Health Colorado. “For these reasons, water fluoridation is one of the most trusted public health measures—supported by dentists and physicians living in the Denver Water community, as well as our organizations and others like the American Dental Association, American Medical Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

“Fluoridation is a smart health strategy — even today, when nearly everyone brushes with fluoride toothpaste. Community water fluoridation offers an easy, inexpensive preventive strategy that everyone benefits from simply by turning on their tap,” Foote concluded. “I want to thank our network of advocates for defending this important public health intervention. Their voices were heard”