



Pennsylvania Rural Health Association

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September 10, 2008

Hon. Scott Conklin
House Appropriations Committee
Room 101-B East Wing
Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2077

Dear Representative Conklin:

We would like to congratulate you for your continued efforts on behalf of healthcare reforms in our Commonwealth designed to lower costs while increasing access to affordable care for all of our citizens.

As a founding member of the PAFLUORIDENOW.ORG coalition, the Pennsylvania Rural Health Association shares your focus on these critical challenges. To further these efforts, we are urging you to request Chairman Evans schedule House Bill 1649 for a vote by the full Appropriations Committee as quickly as possible.

Our Foundation has joined forces with a growing number of advocates, foundations, providers and health activists who recognize that the time has come to ensure all Pennsylvanians have access to this public health benefit. Our grassroots coalition PAFLUORIDENOW.ORG has launched an aggressive public outreach campaign across the Commonwealth.

This measure would improve the health of millions of Pennsylvanians by requiring water systems with 500 or more connections to add fluoride to their water supplies.

Scientific studies over the past 60 years have proven the safety and effectiveness of fluoride in drinking water. Those studies show that fluoride at preventative levels can reduce cavities by 20 to 40 percent in citizens of all ages.

We know the pitfalls of bad oral health. A child with chronic mouth pain cannot concentrate in school. An adult missing teeth may find it difficult to obtain his or her dream job. Older citizens may suffer depression or anxiety if they cannot afford extensive dental work for

damaged teeth and gums. Studies show rural citizens are ten percent less likely to see a dentist regularly as compared to urban residents.

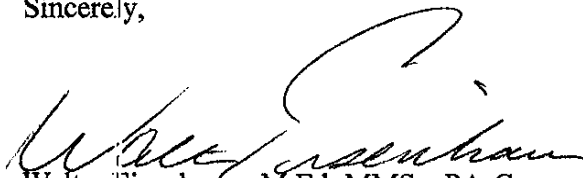
Fluoride can help prevent these problems. Every \$1 invested in fluoridation saves \$38 in dental health services, according to the American Dental Association. We cannot afford to turn our backs on proven science to help as many citizens as we can by fluoridating our state's water supplies. Currently, Pennsylvania ranks 41st among states in the percentage of citizens whose water has optimal fluoride levels, and the percentage of our residents who have the health benefit has actually decreased slightly since 2000.

This is also a taxpayer issue, as many low income individuals receive what dental care they do get through Medicaid. Pennsylvania taxpayers paid \$165 million for Medicaid provided dental care in 2007 alone.

House Bill 1649 has been in the Appropriations Committee for months. Please request the bill be voted on in committee and push for a floor vote as well. The time is now for fluoride in Pennsylvania.

Thank you in advance for making a difference in the oral health of the citizens of our Commonwealth.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Walter Eisenhauer', written in a cursive style.

Walter Eisenhauer, M.Ed, MMSc, PA-C

President

Pennsylvania Rural Health Association