March 23, 2006

Mr. Larry Dilanni
Board of Health Chair
City of Hamilton – Social & Public Health Services Department
1 Hughson Street North, 4th Floor
Hamilton, Ontario L8R 3L5

Dear Mr. Dilanni:

At its March 15, 2007 meeting, the Middlesex-London Board of Health considered Report No. 043-07 re Ontario Fluoridation Office and passed the following resolutions:

1. That the Board of Health support the formation of an Ontario Fluoridation Office funded by the province; and further

2. That the Board of Health seek the support of other Ontario Boards of Health for the establishment of an Ontario Fluoridation Office; and further

3. That letters be sent by the Middlesex-London Board of Health to the Minister of the Environment, the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, the Minister of Health Promotion and the Chief Medical Officer of Health for Ontario to seek support.

Oral health is an important part of total health. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta identified community water fluoridation as one of the 10 most important public health measures of the 20th century. Although recent data indicate that approximately 70% of the Ontario population has access to fluoridated water, the opposition to fluoridation persists and challenges continue to be presented. Those opposed to fluoridation are more organized than ever. In Southwestern Ontario, there have been at least 4 challenges to fluoridation in the last 4 or 5 years including a recent lawsuit.

Community water fluoridation is a complicated and emotional topic. Given the importance of water fluoridation, the Middlesex London Board of Health supports the establishment of an Ontario Fluoridation Office by the provincial government. The Office should be provided resources and be empowered to:

- Constantly assemble and review current scientific evidence on fluorides and water fluoridation;
- Monitor and maintain an inventory of the fluoridation status and fluoride challenges in Ontario and keep track of the arguments and concerns presented and what the outcomes were; and
- Evaluate Ontario data for evidence of the effectiveness of water fluoridation.

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The Ontario Association of Public Health Dentistry (OAPHD) has addressed the topic before and approached the provincial government for their support. In a 2005 September 16 letter to Dr. Butler-Jones, the Chief Medical Officer for Canada, Ontario’s Chief Medical Officer of Health at that time, Dr. Basrur, asked that there be a federal initiative in this area. It is the Middlesex-London Board of Health position that Ontario needs a unified effort on community water fluoridation. The Council of Ontario Medical Officers of Health has endorsed the establishment of an Ontario Fluoridation Office.

The Middlesex-London Board of Health is asking that all Ontario Boards of Health support the establishment of an Ontario Fluoridation Office.

A copy of Report No. 043-07 is attached for your reference. If you require additional information please contact Dr. Neil Farrell, Director, Dental Services, at (519) 663-5317 ext. 2423.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]
Graham L. Pollett, MD, MHSc, FRCPCH
Medical Officer of Health and
Secretary-Treasurer, Middlesex-London Board of Health

GP/VBe

Encl.

C.C. Dr. Neil Farrell
Director, Dental Services
MIDDLESEX-LONDON HEALTH UNIT

REPORT NO. 043-07

TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Health

FROM: Graham L. Pollett, MD, FRCPC
Medical Officer of Health

DATE: March 15, 2007

ONTARIO FLUORIDATION OFFICE

Recommendation

It is recommended:

1. That the Board of Health support the formation of an Ontario Fluoridation Office funded by the province; and further

2. That the Board of Health seek the support of other Ontario Boards of Health for the establishment of an Ontario Fluoridation Office; and further

3. That letters be sent by the Middlesex-London Board of Health to the Minister of the Environment, the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, the Minister of Health Promotion and the Chief Medical Officer of Health for Ontario to seek support.

Oral health is an important part of total health. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta identified community water fluoridation as one of the 10 most important public health measures of the 20th century. Although recent data indicate that approximately 70% of the Ontario population has access to fluoridated water, the opposition to fluoridation persists and challenges continue to be presented. Those opposed to fluoridation are more organized than ever. In Southwestern Ontario, there have been at least 4 challenges to fluoridation in the last 4 or 5 years including a recent lawsuit.

Community water fluoridation is a complicated and emotional topic. An example of how concern and confusion can be created is the syndicated column (60 newspapers) by Dr Gifford Jones which appeared in the 2007 January 20 London Free Press (Appendix A)

Given the importance of water fluoridation, Ontario public health dentists convened to discuss the topic from an Ontario perspective. A number of recommendations were discussed including the establishment of an Ontario Fluoridation Office by the provincial government. The Office should be provided resources and be empowered to:

- constantly assemble and review current scientific evidence on fluorides and water fluoridation
- monitor and maintain an inventory of the fluoridation status and fluoride challenges in Ontario and keep track of the arguments and concerns presented and what the outcomes were
- evaluate Ontario data for evidence of the effectiveness of water fluoridation
The Ontario Association of Public Health Dentistry (OAPHD) has addressed the topic before and approached the provincial government for their support. In a 2005 September 16 letter to Dr Butler-Jones, the Chief Medical Officer for Canada, Ontario’s chief medical Officer of Health at that time, Dr. Basrur, asked that there be a federal initiative in this area. It is the OAPHD’s position that Ontario needs a unified effort on community water fluoridation. The OAPHD will be seeking support from a number of organizations in Ontario. The Council of Ontario Medical Officers of Health has endorsed this position (Appendix B).

This report was prepared by Dr. Neil Farrell, Director of Dental Services

Graham L. Pollett, MD, FRCPC
Medical Officer of Health

This report addresses the following requirement(s) of the Mandatory Health Programs and Services Guidelines: (Family Health-Child Health)
Fluoride endangers our health

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y dentist suggested I have a fluoride treatment to protect my teeth. I agreed. After all, I'd been told since I was knee high that fluoride prevents cavities. I've also used fluoride toothpaste. But I recently decided to research this topic to see if there is a downside.

William, a three-year-old Brooklyn boy, had his first dental checkup in 1974. Fluoride gel was spread over his teeth. Following that, he was handed a glass of water by the dental hygienist, who failed to inform him to swallow the solution in his mouth and spit it out. Instead, he drank the water and a few hours later he was dead from fluoride poisoning. Fluoride is an acute toxin.

I discovered 88 per cent of Europe is fluoride-free. Sweden, Germany, Norway, Holland, Denmark and France stopped using fluoridation over 25 years ago. These are not backward nations.

In 1980, a New Zealand dentist, an ardent supporter of fluoride therapy, was sent by the government on a world tour to study fluoridation. He returned an outspoken critic of its use. In 1989, Dr. Hardy Limbach, professor of dentistry at the University of Toronto and former supporter of fluoridation, reported that fluoride may be destroying our bones, teeth and overall health. He claimed that children under three should never use fluoridated toothpaste nor drink fluoridated water.

The sole argument in favor of fluoridation is that it reduces tooth decay. But several studies involving as many as 800,000 children found no beneficial difference between fluoridated and non-fluoridated communities. Moreover, dental health in Europe has improved since 1970 without fluoride.

Most parents are unaware of dental fluorosis, a discoloration of teeth due to excess fluoride. In 1940, this mottling condition occurred in 10 per cent of children's teeth. Today in some areas, it's as high as 55 per cent. One reason: children's toothpaste tastes good and they swallow too much of it.

Bones also collect fluoride and can develop skeletal fluorosis. Since 1980, numerous studies have reported an association between fluoridated water and hip fractures. Fluoridation is also known to increase osteoporosis.

In 1999, a U.S. study found a strong link between fluoridation and osteosarcoma, a bone cancer in young males. The rates were three to seven times higher in fluoridated areas. Studies in China show reduced IQ in children overexposed to fluoride from drinking water. Further effects include decreased concentration, memory loss and confusion. I didn't know that Torontonians have double the fluoride levels in hip bones as Mumbaikars, whose city water is not fluoridated. Studies also show fluoride causes decreased levels of sperm and testosterone. I wonder if that explains the rumor that they make love in Montreal while Torontonians only think about making money.

There is no convincing reason why water should contain 1.5 parts per million (ppm) of fluoride when its risk is greater than its benefit. Toothpaste has up to 1,500 ppm and treatment in a dentist's office another whopping 10,000 to 20,000 ppm! Besides, our bodies do not need fluoride. The best solution is to ban fluoridation of water and buy toothpaste without fluoride.

I finally found a non-fluoride toothpaste in a health food store. And I imagine you've guessed what I'll say when next asked by my dentist, "Do you want the fluoride treatment?"

Gifford-Jones, the author of seven books and his column appears in 60 Canadian newspapers. He has a medical practice in Toronto.
Marg Rappolt, Deputy Minister  
Ministry of Health Promotion  
777 Bay Street, 18th Floor,  
Toronto, ON M7A 1S5  

Dear Ms. Rappolt:  

Re. Fluoridation of Drinking Water  

On behalf of the Council of Ontario Medical Officers of Health (COMOH), a Section of the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHA), I am writing today to introduce a resolution passed at our December 1st, 2006 meeting, calling upon the Ministry of Health Promotion to develop a provincial position in support of the continued fluoridation of Ontario drinking water supplies.  

This request is in response to a number of Health Units experiencing challenges to the ongoing fluoridation of municipal drinking water supplies within their geographic areas of jurisdiction. It is both time consuming and costly to defend such challenges. Since the scientific evidence and arguments (legal and medical) to be made for fluoridation are the same no matter what the location, it would facilitate current and future proceedings in this regard for the Ministry to develop a position paper compiling the evidence in support of this practice.  

Since the Council’s resolution was passed, the Ontario Association of Public Health Dentistry (OAPHD) has petitioned COMOH to support their call for the establishment of an Ontario Fluoridation Office (attached). The proposed Office would:  

- Constantly assemble and review current scientific evidence on fluoridates and water fluoridation  
- Monitor and maintain an inventory of the fluoridation status and fluoride challenges in Ontario and keep a record of the legal arguments made and the concerns raised as well as the outcomes of the individual challenges  
- Evaluate Ontario data for evidence of the effectiveness of water fluoridation.  

The call for an Ontario Fluoridation Office complements the intent of the COMOH resolution. The OAPHD proposal has subsequently been endorsed by COMOH.  

Thank you for your attention to this important public health matter. We look forward to your response.  

Yours sincerely,  

Graham L. Pollett, MD, MHSc, FRCPC  
Chair, Council of Ontario Medical Officers of Health  

Copy: Dr. Robert Bowes, President, Ontario Association of Public Health Dentistry (OAPHD)  
Dr. Sandra Bennett, Senior Dental Consultant  
Dr. George Pasut, Acting Chief Medical Officer of Health  

Encl.