

# Community Water Fluoridation

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*Expanding Access, Creating Equity*

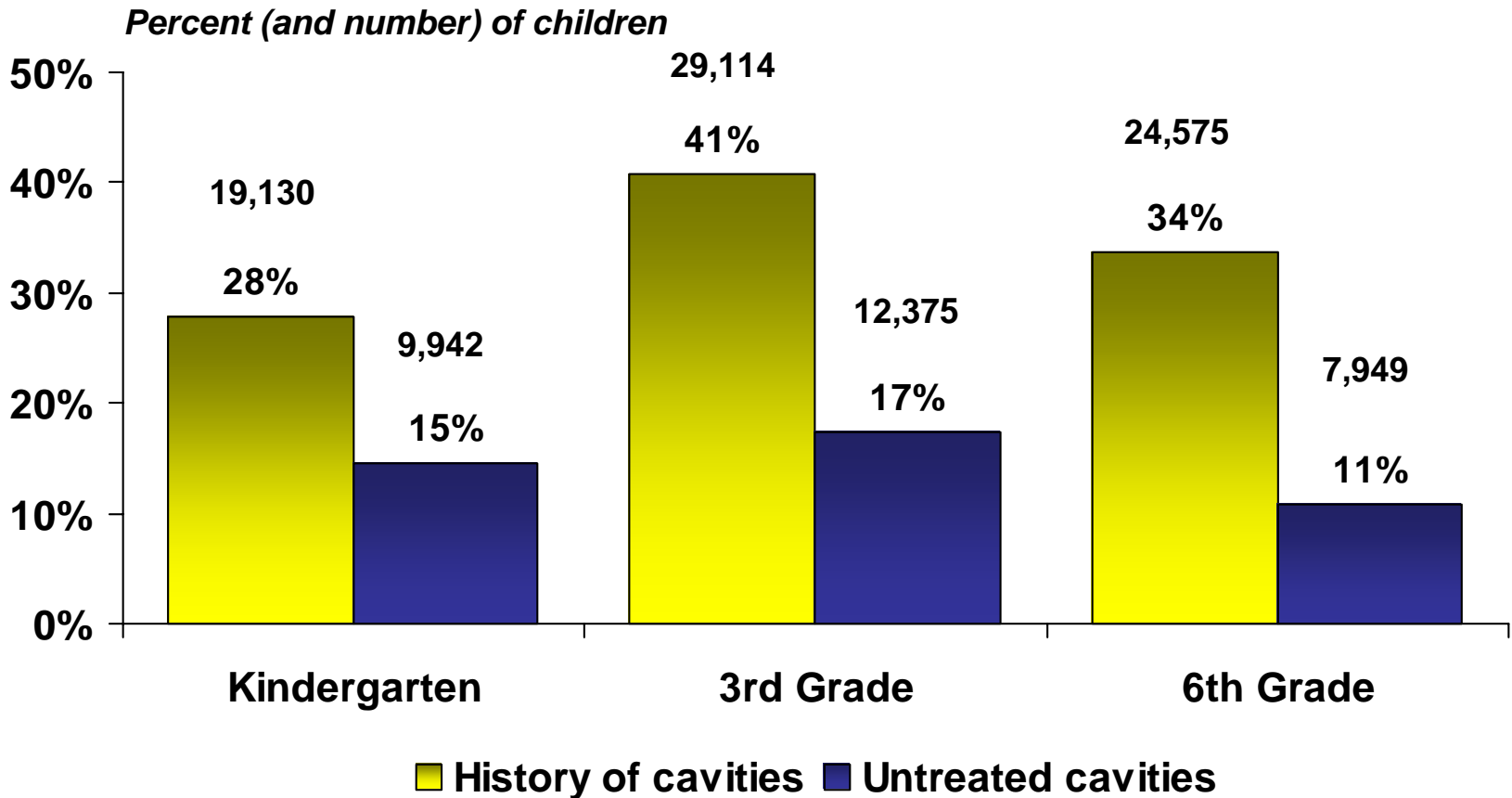
*Robyn Olson, RDH, BS, MPA*

# Community Solutions to a Community Problem

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- Dental decay is a bacterial infection and untreated decay can interfere with basic activities such as eating, speaking, sleeping, learning and working
- Children miss more than 51 million school hours and adults miss 164 million work hours each year due to dental related illnesses
- Dental diseases can impact overall health and quality of life for both children and adults
- The entire community benefits from preventing dental disease through lower insurance premiums and healthier and more productive community members

# Dental Disease is a Serious Health Issue for Massachusetts Children



# Fluoridation Makes Sense for MA and its Communities!

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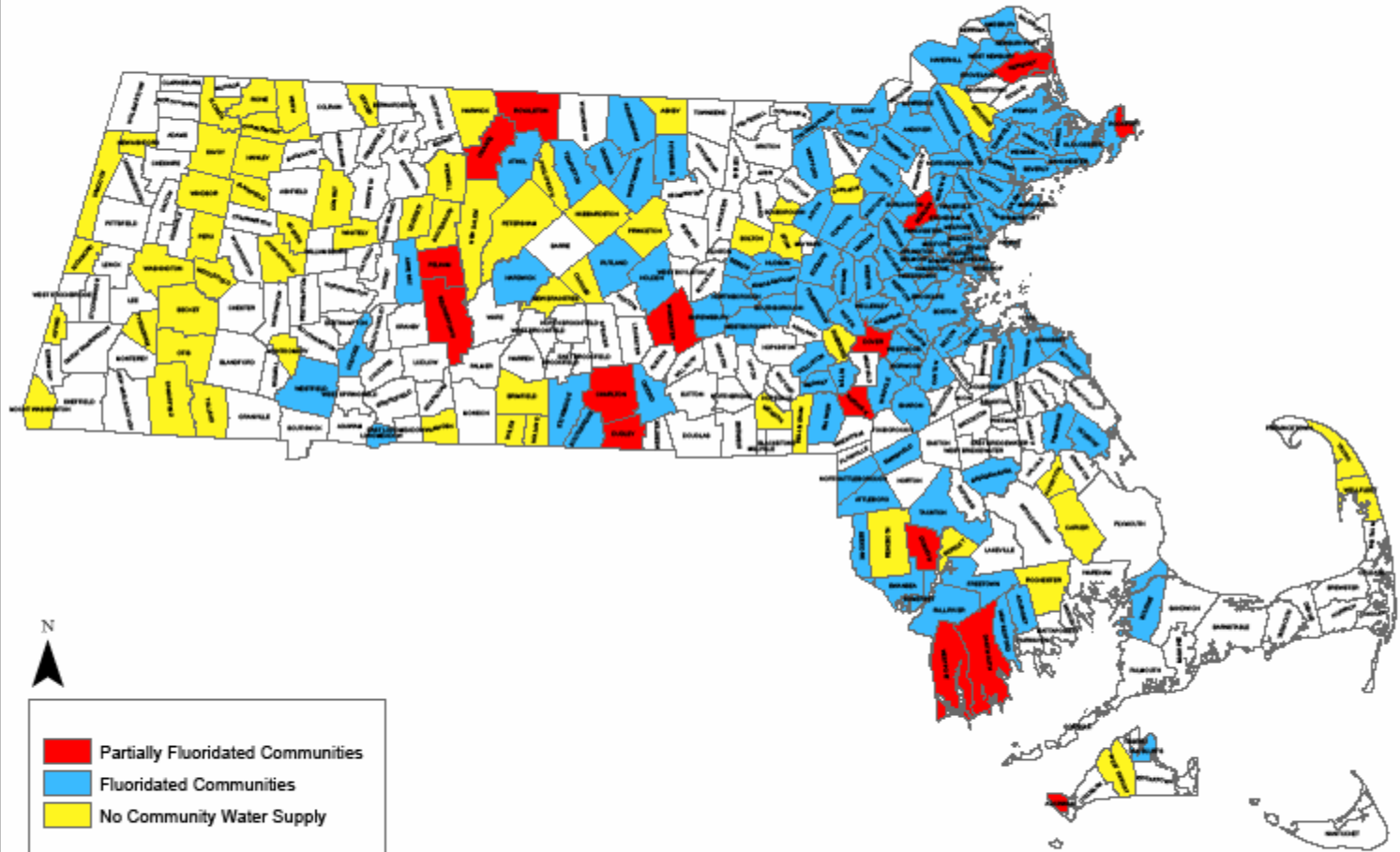
- Top ten greatest public health achievements of the 20<sup>th</sup> century – CDC
- Sixty years of scientific evidence and research and more than 3700 peer –reviewed articles have found CWF to be both safe and effective
- Can reduce dental decay by 20-40%
- For most communities, every \$1 invested saves \$38 in dental treatment costs
- 63% of MA residents live in fluoridated communities – ranking us 35<sup>th</sup> in the nation!

# Fluoride

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- Naturally occurring compound that can help prevent dental decay
- Fluoride helps to strengthen against demineralization and aids in the remineralization process
- Inhibits bacterial metabolism
- Protects teeth both topically and systemically

### 139 Massachusetts Communities Receiving Water Fluoridation



Bureau of Community Health Access and Promotion  
Division of Primary Care & Health Access Office of Oral Health

March 2008

# We Can Do Better!

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- Healthy People 2010 goal is 75%
- Fluoridation is Fundamental to a Healthy Community
- Need to work together to achieve this goal
- Fluoridation is Fundamental but also a Formidable challenge!

# Oral Health Advocacy Task Force

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- Statewide coalition of consumers, advocates, health care professionals and insurers has made extending fluoridation in MA a priority
- Community Water Fluoridation Workgroup has recently developed a strategic plan to address this issue
- Organizations participating in subcommittee are diverse
- Used a consensus process to make decision on approach

# Campaign Goals

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Support local Boards of Health, decision makers, and communities, as they emerge; proactively work with strategic communities toward fluoridation; educate local and statewide agencies and organizations with the goal of a statewide fluoridation bill when appropriate. Develop benchmarks to define what “when appropriate” means and to aim for those benchmarks.

# Advocacy Power Prism

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- Research and Data Collection
- Coalition Building and Maintenance
- Fundraising and Development
- Media Advocacy
- Lobbying and Legislative Advocacy

# Help Emerging Communities

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- Resources of Task Force and partners are limited and fluoridation efforts require significant commitment
- Develop “toolkit” that utilizes strengths of Task Force partners
- Develop tracking mechanism so that all partners are in the communication loop

# Identify Strategic Communities

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- Determine criteria for “strategic community”
- Communities must be interested and meet criteria
- Potential communities will be assessed for readiness to move forward
  - BOH buy-in
  - Polling data
  - Campaign champions
  - Community group support
- Assess time frame, budget and funding sources
- Begin collaboration effort with community

# Statewide Legislation

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- Authorize CWF at state level versus through local BOH
- Currently 12 states have this legislation
- Develop benchmarks
  - Need support of multiple organizations
  - Need local support
  - Need legislative champions
  - Need funding
  - Need educated speakers bureau
  - If and when we meet these and other benchmarks, we would move forward with statewide effort

# Please join us!

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- Join the Task Force
- Participate in Fluoridation Work Group
- Advocate for community water fluoridation for all MA citizens!

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# Thank You!

Contact Info:

[rolson@deltamass.com](mailto:rolson@deltamass.com)

617-886-1186