

Community Water Fluoridation Efforts Successful in November's Elections

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Community water fluoridation was recently featured in the Surgeon General's ***Report on Oral Health in America*** as the safest, most effective, and most cost-effective public health measure to prevent dental decay in all Americans and to reduce the oral health disparities experienced by some segments of American society. In addition, it recently was termed one of the ***Ten Greatest Public Health Achievements in the Twentieth Century*** by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention.

Although it is the only public health measure routinely subjected to voter referenda, community water fluoridation was adopted successfully in a number of American cities during the November 2000 general election. In spite of intense opposition by small groups of local antifluoride zealots, cities approving fluoridation included San Antonio, Texas; Las Vegas-Clark County, Nevada; Salt Lake City-County, Utah; Abilene Texas; Davis County, Utah; Sunnyvale, California; Gilbert, Arizona; Leavenworth, Kansas; and North Attleboro, Massachusetts. The total population that will be served by fluoridated water systems as a result of the election is estimated to be **3,957,079**.

Despite the significant efforts of health professionals, public health officials, and community groups, fluoridation efforts were temporarily stymied by election losses in Spokane, Washington, and 13 other smaller communities. The total population that will be denied the benefits of fluoridation because of the election losses is estimated to be **366,347**.