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To: Valparaiso Fluoride Commission

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Subject: Support of community water fluoridation in Valparaiso, Indiana

Members of the Commission and visitors, I am thankful for the opportunity to present evidence in support of the use of community water fluoridation to prevent dental decay. I am a scientist, a licensed dentist, the Director of the Division of Community Dentistry at the Indiana University School of Dentistry (IUSD) and the Interim Chair of the Department of Preventive and Community dentistry, also at IUSD. For the past 24 years, I have conducted research studies to understand ways to prevent dental caries, and practiced dentistry helping my patients prevent cavities in their mouths. I am happy to share with the commission and the Valparaiso community what I have learned from these experiences.

For 70 years, people in the United States have benefitted from drinking water with adjusted levels of fluoride, leading to better overall dental health. During this time, there have been many studies conducted to investigate the safety and effectiveness of fluoride. The overwhelming majority of these scientific studies have shown that fluoride is effective and safe the way it is currently used. Scientists agree that water fluoridation remains an effective and safe public health measure for caries prevention and that it is also cost-saving. Costs for treatment of tooth decay are significantly lower in communities that have fluoride in their community water supplies.

Although some groups have claimed the use of fluoride has multiple side effects, with the exception of enamel fluorosis (a minor side effect), research studies have found no other adverse effects that can be attributed to the use of water fluoridation. In fact, mild levels of enamel fluorosis have been found to be cosmetically pleasing to the public. There have been multiple panels of experts and scientific groups that have carefully reviewed the results of these studies; every single one of these structured and formal reviews conducted by experts have concluded fluoride is safe. More recently, concerns have been expressed regarding the effect of fluoride on intelligence. I am part of a group of scientists that is investigating this claim. Initial results of our study show no significantly association between fluoride in mothers during pregnancy and the mental development scores of their children at ages one, two, or three.