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Monthly Update

April 2019

CDC Report Emphasizes Safety of Water Fluoridation

Health advocates and clinicians understand that fluoride is a safe, effective, and inexpensive way to prevent dental disease. Despite proven research, anti-fluoride activists use out-of-context findings or debunked reports to scare communities about fluoride's safety.

Unfortunately, the new National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) data may add fuel to the fire for the anti-fluoride community. The report found increased rates of fluorosis, a condition caused by high exposure to fluoride while the tooth is developing. While the CDC's National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) released a [report](#) explaining that the results are not reliable, because of, among other things, inconsistent examinations and subjective scoring, we anticipate that the anti-fluoride community will try to use the data to further their message. You may hear from patients or other partners with questions and concerns about what these reports mean. Bottom line, **water fluoridation is a safe and effective way to prevent cavities.**

Upcoming Events

Workgroup Meetings

June 11 | [Early Dental Home/PIOHQ! Project Advisory Board](#)

Partner Events

April-May | [SignUpNow Trainings](#)
The final SignUpNow Trainings will be an opportunity to learn more about the application process for Medicaid.

Coalition Wide Events

Special Needs Dentistry Series
 May 10-11 | [Radford](#)

November 7 | [2019 Oral Health Summit](#)

Donate

As stakeholders who care about oral health, you are uniquely positioned to promote the safety and effectiveness of fluoridated water and clear up confusion. To that end:



1. **Be an advocate:** The community water fluoridation Rapid Response Team (RRT) members serve as local advocates, lifting up challenges to fluoridation, like the NHANES study, and sharing information on the importance and safety of fluoride. [Join the RRT today.](#)
2. **Build trust in water by participating in community events:** Raising awareness in the community on the safety of fluoridated water proactively is a great way to build trust. Virginia's annual Rev Your Bev Day is an opportunity to do just that. On May 9 join health advocates around the state in promoting fluoridated water. [Learn more about the event on our blog.](#)
3. **Model the behavior you want to see:** Change starts with us, talk to your patients and partners about water fluoridation; serve fluoridated tap water at meetings and events in place of bottled water, and consider providing employees or volunteers reusable water bottles as well.

Learn more about community water fluoridation in Virginia, and find additional resources, on [our website.](#)

Oral Health News & Resources

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Preparing for the Census' Impact on Virginia's Health Programs



The census results are used to distribute billions in federal funds for programs like Head Start, SNAP, and Maternal and Child Health block grants. At the federal level, the Supreme Court heard arguments about the constitutionality of a citizenship question on the census. This question has the potential to limit

participation in the census, as it reinforces growing fears about immigration and deportation. and will likely result in undercounting as individuals choose not to respond at all, ultimately affecting Virginia’s funding for important programs.

Because of the citizenship question, reaching out at the community level to build trust in the census will be important. However, as reported in [Virginia Mercury](#), the Virginia General Assembly removed community outreach funding from the budget. On our [blog](#), VaOHC CEO Sarah Holland shares the importance of a complete census count, and how health advocates can work to ensure a complete count of the populations they serve.

Share Your Great Work at the 2019 Virginia Oral Health Summit

The Virginia Oral Health Coalition is accepting speaker applications for a panel on improving community health. Partners are encouraged to submit an application highlighting research or a recent initiative that improved health outcomes. Panel topics may include: increasing access to equitable, integrated care; incorporating population health into patient care and engagement; and, augmenting existing programs to apply a health equity lens. Share your great work with over 200 health advocates at the annual event in November, [submit your speaker application](#) by **April 30** to be considered.



Integration Between Medical and Dental Providers can Reduce Oral Cancer

Rising Rates of HPV-Associated Oropharyngeal Cancers: A Challenge For Interprofessional Education and Practice

Jessamin E. Cipollina, M.A.

During Oral Cancer Awareness Month, we consider how oral cancer screenings can save lives. Considering untreated oral HPV is associated with the [recent increase in oral cancers](#), we have an opportunity for closer collaboration

and care integration between medical and dental providers. By providing oral cancer screenings and educating patients about the HPV vaccine, all health providers can help raise oral cancer awareness every month of the year.



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Virginia Health Catalyst (formerly the Virginia Oral Health Coalition)
4200 Innslake Dr Ste 202
Glen Allen, VA 23060-6772

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