

State of Maine | 132nd Legislature
Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services
Testimony of Annick Metoule on behalf of Maine Primary Care Association
April 22, 2025

Opposing:
LD 1570, “An Act to Prohibit Fluoridation of the Public Water Supply”
Sponsored by Representative Poirier

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Human Health and Services, I am Annick Metoule, Oral Health Program Manager at Maine Primary Care Association (MPCA).

MPCA is a membership organization that represents Maine’s Community Health Centers (CHCs), also known as Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs). Maine's CHCs make up the largest independent primary care network in the state, providing high quality and accessible primary and preventive medical, behavioral, and dental health services for over 200,000 people (1 in 6 Mainers) at more than 100 service delivery sites in all 16 Maine counties.

We oppose LD 1570, which seeks to prohibit fluoride from being added to the public water supply. Fluoride strengthens teeth and prevents tooth decay. Adjusting fluoride levels in water to support oral health is safe, thoroughly studied, endorsed by every major public health and medical organization, and a cost-effective way to improve the dental health of Maine residents.¹

Children, especially those in low-income families, benefit the most. In 2019, the Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey reported that 44.7% of Maine children experience dental caries, a kind of tooth decay, by the third grade. More recently, the School Oral Health Program visited 229 schools during the 2023-24 school year, where they administered oral health screenings to more than 13,200 students. Of those screened, 30% had untreated decay, nearly 27% needed early intervention, and 6.5% needed immediate intervention.² Fluoridation helps keep kids in school and out of pain by preventing the number one chronic disease of childhood: tooth decay.

Community water fluoridation is one of the most effective public health measures of the last century. As our state struggles with access to dental care, especially providers that accept MaineCare for dental services, we should not take a step back. We encourage the committee to vote ought not to pass on LD 1570.

On behalf of Maine’s Community Health Centers, thank you for considering our comments. Please do not hesitate to contact me directly at ametoule@mepca.org with any follow-up questions.

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¹ <https://www.ada.org/resources/community-initiatives/fluoride-in-water/fluoridation-faqs>

² <https://www.mcd.org/news/dental-decay-rates-increase-maine-students>