

Project Title: Nevada State Planning and Fluoridation  
Systems Development (NVSPFSD) Project

Project Number: 93.110 R

Project Director: Judith M. Wright

Grantee: Nevada State Health Division

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Project Period: 10/1/97-11/30/00

Total Amount of Grant Awarded: \$140,000.00

Nevada State Planning and Fluoridation Systems Development  
(NVSPFSD) Project

Narrative:

I. Purpose:

The major purpose of this project was to prevent dental caries by providing optimal levels of fluoride in Nevada's community water systems. This project was funded under the State Planning and Fluoridation Systems Development Initiative (CFDA #93.110 R).

A statewide needs assessment demonstrated that almost 70% of Nevada's children had experienced tooth decay in permanent or primary teeth. Nevada had the lowest rate of naturally occurring community water fluoridation in the nation at less than 2%. Fluoride added to community water systems has been demonstrated to be the single most effective public health measure to prevent tooth decay.

The Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Advisory Board, in preparation for their annual report and recommendations, held a session in November 1998, to prioritize their concerns for 1999. Through this process the MCH Board unanimously supported optimum fluoridation of Nevada's community water supplies as their top priority.

Nevada was one of six states with less than 25%

fluoridation of community water systems. Therefore, the significance of this project on a regional and national level is not particularly high.

There were not any links to other SPRANS projects.

## II. Goals and Objectives:

The goal was to promote optimal fluoridation of Nevada's community water systems. The focus was on gaining support for legislation that would mandate water fluoridation in the larger populations of the state. The long-term objective was to educate the public and the health community about the benefits of fluoride for good oral health, regardless of whether legislation passed.

Local attempts under Nevada statutes had failed to implement community water fluoridation. Therefore, it was felt that legislation provided another opportunity to fluoridate Nevada's community water systems. Nevadans would receive the benefit of optimal fluoride levels; a reduction in the incidence of dental caries.

The fluoride project was housed within the Bureau of Family Health Services (BFHS), Nevada's Title V Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Agency. The Bureau's Chief serves as the state's MCH Manager. There is not a specific Oral Health Office in Nevada; therefore oral health initiatives are the responsibility of the Nevada State Health Division

and are conducted within the Bureau of Family and Health Services (BFHS).

### III. Methodology:

An in-depth review and analysis of the 1997 effort to pass legislation requiring community water systems to fluoridate included identifying the issues, concerns, fears, etc. which caused its failure to pass. The Governor's Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Advisory Board developed an Oral Health Action Plan for Nevada which included the recommendation that community water systems be optimally fluoridated.

A dental coalition was formed and expanded to support the campaign. Support of water systems fluoridation from the medical community, parent organizations, community based organizations, county commissioners, county boards of health, operators of community water systems, etc., were also sought. A Fluoride Coordinator was hired to help with fluoride education and coalition building. The Fluoride Coordinator was hired as a half-time contractor, using funding from this grant.

The Fluoride Coordinator purchased fluoride brochures from the American Association of Public Health Dentistry in both English and Spanish and from the American Dental Association, using approximately \$7,000.00 of grant monies.

These were distributed at meetings, health fairs, and other opportunities.

Through the Baby Your Baby Program the project was able to utilize public service announcements (PSAs) to provide education to the public regarding the benefits of fluoride. The Public Service Announcements (PSAs) ran during the final three months of the 1999 legislative session. (Nevada's legislature meets every two years.) Nevada's Baby Your Baby Program, also in the Bureau of Family Health Services (BFHS), is a public/private partnership that promotes the health of Nevada's children. It includes a multi-media component that is performed by the state's NBC affiliate, Sunbelt Broadcasting.

A contractual agreement for \$20,000.00 was signed between the State of Nevada and Clark County Health District, in Southern Nevada. The funding for the contract came from this grant. The money was used to educate the Southern Nevada public about the benefits of fluoridated water through a comprehensive campaign lasting approximately six months. The Clark County Health District dedicated approximately \$45,000.00 of their budget to this educational campaign.

The Clark County Health District hired a communications company to coordinate and execute their campaign.

Outdoor advertising discussing the benefits of water fluoridation was used on bus shelters in high traffic areas for a period of four months prior to the vote on the fluoride initiative. One month prior to the vote, radio spots on several Clark County radio stations were used to discuss the benefits of fluoridated water. Clark County Health District designed a fluoride mailer explaining that fluoridation is the most effective way to promote both pediatric and adult oral health regardless of access to dental care. The mailer was sent to 227,488 Clark County residences, not necessarily registered voters, as part of Clark County's health education program.

#### IV. Evaluation:

The 1999 Legislature passed two bills addressing fluoridation of the public water systems, AB 284 and AB 689, these are now part of Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS): Chapter 445A. The State Board of Health adopted new regulations to the Nevada Administrative Code (NAC) under Chapter 445A, dealing with water fluoridation. As of March 2, 2000, the water provided by the Southern Nevada Water Authority and the City of Henderson was optimally fluoridated. The decision to keep the community water optimally fluoridated was put to a vote of the people in November of 2000, and passed.

V. Results/Outcome:

The positive election results in Clark County will serve to reinforce the belief that public awareness of the benefits of community water fluoridation is a critical factor in efforts to optimally fluoridate other community water supplies in Nevada.

Clark County has the largest population in Nevada, with approximately 1,300,000 people. The demographics of the nonwhite racial/ethnic origin population in Clark County are as follows: Hispanic Origin 16.2%, Black 10.3%, Asian/Pacific Islander 4.8%, Native American 1%. It is estimated that the number of individuals living below the poverty line in Clark County is 11.2%. These numbers are based on the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Community Health Status Indicators Project.

Nevada was ranked 50<sup>th</sup> for fluoridation of community water systems. It is now ranked 37<sup>th</sup>, with approximately 69% of Nevadans having access to fluoridated water. The areas that now have fluoridated community water include; Las Vegas, North Las Vegas, Boulder City, and Nellis Air Force Base. The Southern Nevada Water Authority and the City of Henderson serve these areas.

The lessons learned from the efforts by other states and communities to accomplish community water system

fluoridation were reviewed, and relevant factors leading to success or failure were taken into consideration. Based on this review, an education campaign was developed and implemented to support the concept of community water systems fluoridation. The time spent on educating the general public about the benefits of community water fluoridation was a contributing factor to the fluoride initiative being passed. This could be replicated in other communities working on fluoridation of community water supplies.

#### VI. Publications/Products:

Billboards were designed and placed in Northern and Southern Nevada. These were designed to target both adults and children. The slogan, "Got (to have) Fluoride?!!" was used, similar to the "Got Milk" campaign that is familiar to people. The information was kept minimal and straightforward: 1. Fluoride is a NATURAL MINERAL, 2. Fluoridation is SAFE, 3. Fluoridation benefits people of ALL AGES, 4. Fluoridation saves YOU money on dental care. A black and white copy of the billboard is included as Appendix A. Copies are available through the Nevada State Health Division, Bureau of Family Health Services (BFHS). HRSA was given credit for partial funding on the billboards.

Through the Clark County Health District a fluoride mailer, bus shelter posters, and radio spots were developed. The mailer was sent to 227,488 Clark County residences. It was a three-fold mailer, done in bright colors, with a large smile on the cover. The message conveyed inside the mailer was that fluoridation of community water supplies is one of the top ten public health achievements of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. A telephone number and a website address ([www.cchd.org/fluoride](http://www.cchd.org/fluoride)) were included for those interested in getting more "fluoride facts." A color copy of the mailer is included as Appendix B. The posters were placed in bus shelters located in "high traffic" areas. These posters were in place for a period of four months. The posters stated, "Fluoride's Benefits are Crystal Clear." The outer border was red with the main background in purple. One poster had a water faucet and the other had a drinking glass with water and ice cubes. The posters included the phone number for the Clark County Health District and the web site address. Black and white copies of these posters are included as Appendix C. The radio spots were aired for a period of four weeks prior to the vote on the fluoride initiative. The target group was college educated, men and women with emphasis on females over the age of twenty-five. The radio spot was modeled

after the "Who Wants To Be a Millionaire" television show. A toothless character is asked, "What is nature's gift to a smile? Is it A, paste; B, gloss; C, floss; D, fluoride?" The character uses a lifeline to call the Clark County Health District and finds the answer is fluoride. Upon winning the character says he will use his winnings to get teeth. A copy of the radio spot is included as Appendix D.

Copies of the mailer and bus shelter poster are available through Jeanne Palmer, Health Education Manager, Clark County Health District, P.O. Box 3902, Las Vegas, Nevada, 89127. The radio spot is available through Sharon Chyra, at Chyra Communications, (702) 658-3236.

A contract between the State of Nevada and the Clark County Health District involved money from this grant. It was an omission in the contract that allowed money from the grant to be used to partially fund the activities undertaken by C.C.H.D. without giving the proper recognition to H.R.S.A. Personnel changes were partially responsible for this omission.

#### V. Dissemination/Utilization of Results:

The information learned from the experience in Clark County will be useful in the effort to further fluoridate

community water supplies in Nevada, specifically Washoe County.

A half-time contractor has been used to provide fluoride education, coalition building, and support. The contractor spent time distributing literature on fluoride to the general public through meetings, health fairs, etc., as well as being a resource for those interested in supporting community water fluoridation. These efforts to raise public awareness of the benefits of community water fluoridation were felt to be a very critical factor in the fluoride initiative being passed by the Clark County voters in November 2000. The contractor, now supported by a grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, is currently working on fluoride education, coalition building, and support in Northern Nevada, targeting Washoe County.

A Resource and Policy Assistance Center for Community Water Systems Fluoridation was developed. Literature and information on community water fluoridation and fluoride are available to the public through the Fluoride Coordinator in the Nevada State Health Division; Bureau of Family Health Services (BFHS) located in Carson City, Nevada. The general public can also access information on

community water fluoridation and water testing through the Nevada State Health Division's website.

VIII: Future Plans/Follow-up:

The project in Clark County was deemed successful based on the passing of the fluoride initiative. This allowed the continuation of fluoridated water to be supplied by the Southern Nevada Water Authority and the City of Henderson. The cost to install the necessary equipment at each site was as follows: Southern Nevada Water Authority \$216,734.51 and City of Henderson \$245,441.00. Currently each of the water suppliers has been reimbursed \$83,732.00, using money from another grant.

The short-term impact of the project will be the education program that has been implemented, the coalitions that have been formed, and the support that is currently in place. These will be useful in the efforts to optimally fluoridate the community water supplies in Washoe County.

The long-term impact of the project will be the reduction in incidence of dental caries in the population being served by optimally fluoridated water supplies. This will contribute to improvement in overall general health and well being.

Replication of this project is currently underway in Washoe County. This area includes the cities of Reno and

Sparks. Washoe County has a population of approximately 340,000 people. Outside of Clark County, which is now a fluoridated community, Washoe County has the largest concentration of population in Nevada. The goal is to have a community water fluoridation initiative placed on the November 2002 ballot. Public information and outreach programs are currently active. Experience has shown that the most crucial period of time to disseminate information will be during the six months prior to the vote.

VI. Type/Amount of Support and Resources Needed to

Replicate:

This type of project has been replicated throughout the United States. Information from similar projects was the basis for many of the strategies that were used in Clark County.

This type of project requires a significant amount of financial support. The grant amount was \$140,000.00, of which \$133,036.00 was used. The difference in the amount used and the amount granted is due to \$6,964.00 not being carried over from Year 2 of the grant. The \$133,036.00 covered the costs of personnel, educational materials, travel expenses, a computer and printer, general operating expenses (phone, postage, copying) and an educational campaign. The fluoridation equipment purchased by Southern

Nevada Water Authority and the City of Henderson was partially reimbursed by monies from a grant funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The position of a half-time fluoride contractor to organize and initiate educational materials, coalitions, and training, was integral to the success of the campaign. Approximately 68% of grant monies were spent on the coordinator's wages. A computer and printer were necessary for the fluoride contractor's use, that purchase amounted to \$2,810.46. A desk and two chairs were purchased from State Surplus Property for \$105.00.

The cost to purchase educational materials such as brochures, booklets, and posters was approximately \$7,600.00. The State of Nevada had a contract with Clark County Health District for \$20,000.00 to be used on the public awareness/education campaign.

Travel expenses in-state and out of state ran approximately \$2,800.00. This was primarily travel between Carson City, where the Fluoridation Coordinator is based, and Las Vegas.

Support from volunteers was necessary to create coalitions. A group calling themselves "Citizens for Healthy Smiles" had members who volunteered to speak to various groups about fluoride and water fluoridation. Some

of the members were from the dental profession and others were concerned parents and citizens. The volunteers made themselves available to do whatever was needed prior to the vote on the fluoridation initiative. The help provided by volunteers is priceless.

Annotation:

The purpose of Nevada's State Planning and Fluoridation Systems Development Project was to prevent dental caries by providing optimal levels of fluoride in Nevada's community water systems. A statewide need assessment demonstrated that almost 70% of Nevada's children had experienced tooth decay in permanent or primary teeth. The goal was to get legislation passed in 1999 that would allow for fluoridation of community water systems and get fluoridation systems implemented. The main activities used to attain these goals were coalition building and public education. As a result of these activities, the voters in Clark County passed the fluoride initiative, resulting in fluoridation of the community water systems in the largest population area of Nevada.

Key Words:

Fluoridation; Community Based Health Education; Community Based Preventative Health; Health Promotion; Media Campaigns; Oral Health; Preventative Health Care; Preventative Health Care Education; Public Health Education; Title V Programs

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Nevada State Planning and Fluoridation Systems Development  
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ABSTRACT:

PURPOSE: The major purpose of the project was to prevent dental caries by providing optimal levels of fluoride in Nevada's community water systems. A statewide need assessment demonstrated that almost 70% of Nevada's children had experienced tooth decay in permanent or primary teeth. Nevada was one of six states with less than 25% fluoridation of community water systems.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES: The goal was to promote optimal fluoridation of Nevada's community water systems through legislation that would mandate water fluoridation in the larger populations of the state. The long-term objective was to educate the public and the health community about the benefits of fluoride for good oral health, regardless of whether legislation passed.

METHODOLOGY: A coalition was formed with dental professionals, the medical community, parent organizations, community based organizations, county commissioners, county boards of health, and operators of community water systems. A Fluoride Coordinator was hired to help with fluoride education and coalition building. A contractual agreement

for \$20,000.00, to be used for public education and awareness, was made between the State of Nevada and Clark County Health District. The money was used for a comprehensive education campaign that included fluoridation mailers, bus shelter posters, and radio spots.

**EVALUATION:** The 1999 legislature passed two bills addressing fluoridation of the public water systems. As of March 2, 2000, the water provided by the Southern Nevada Water Authority and the City of Henderson was optimally fluoridated. The decision to keep the community water fluoridated was put to a vote of the people in November of 2000, and passed.

**RESULTS/OUTCOME:** The positive election results in Clark County will serve to reinforce the belief that public awareness of the benefits of community water fluoridation is a critical factor in efforts to optimally fluoridate other community water supplies in Nevada.

Clark County has the largest population in Nevada, with approximately 1,300,000 people. Prior to fluoridation of the community water systems in Clark County, Nevada ranked 50<sup>th</sup> for community water fluoridation. Nevada is now ranked 37<sup>th</sup>, with approximately 69% of Nevadans having access to fluoridated community water.

An education campaign was developed and implemented to support the concept of community water systems fluoridation. The time spent on education of the general public about the benefits of community water fluoridation was a contributing factor to the fluoride initiative being passed. This could be replicated in other communities working on fluoridation of community water supplies.

PUBLICATION/PRODUCTS: Billboards were designed and placed in Northern and Southern Nevada. The slogan, "Got Fluoride!!" was used, similar to the "Got Milk" campaign that is familiar to people. The message was straightforward; fluoride is safe, natural, benefits all ages, and saves money.

Through the Clark County Health District a fluoride mailer, bus shelter poster, and radio spots were developed. The mailer was sent to 227,488 Clark County residences. It included a telephone number and a website address ([www.cchd.org/fluoride](http://www.cchd.org/fluoride)) to obtain more information.

DISSEMINATION/UTILIZATION OF RESULTS: A Resource and Policy Assistance Center for Community Water Systems Fluoridation was developed. Literature and information on community water fluoridation and fluoride are available to the public through the Fluoride Coordinator in the Nevada State Health Division, Bureau of Family Health Services,

located in Carson City, Nevada. The general public can also access information through the Nevada State Health Division's website.

FUTURE PLANS/FOLLOW-UP: Replication of this project is currently underway in Washoe County, Nevada. The goal is to have a community water fluoridation initiative placed on the November 2002 ballot. Public information and outreach programs are currently active.

TYPE/AMOUNT of SUPPORT and RESOURCES NEEDED to REPLICATE:

This type of project requires a significant amount of financial support. The money allotted in this grant was used to cover the costs of personnel, educational materials, travel expenses, computer and hardware, general operating expenses (phone, postage, copying), and an educational campaign.

Support from volunteers was necessary to create coalitions. A group calling themselves "Citizens for Healthy Smiles" had members who volunteered to speak to various groups about fluoride and water fluoridation. Some of the members were from the dental profession and others were concerned parents and citizens. The volunteers made themselves available to do whatever was needed prior to the vote on the fluoridation initiative.

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(NVSPFSD) Project - 93.110 R

Equipment Purchased with Grant Funds

A. Gateway Computer, Keyboard, 17" Monitor

1. Acquisition Date: May 7, 1998
2. Serial #: 0009804535  
  
Keyboard - Model # 2196003  
  
17" Monitor - Model # Gateway 700-069CS  
  
Tower - Model # GP6-350
3. Acquisition Cost = \$2,288.55  
  
Amount Charged to Grant = \$2,288.55
4. Location - Nevada State Health Division, Maternal  
  
and Child Health Bureau, Office of the  
  
Fluoridation Contractor.  
  
Condition of Equipment - Good.
5. The computer will continue to be used by the  
  
Fluoride Contractor.

B. Printer

1. Acquisition Date: May 7, 1998
2. Serial #: US832C20XB      Model #: C5315A
3. Acquisition Cost = \$521.91  
  
Cost to Grant = \$521.91
4. Location - Nevada State Health Division, Maternal  
  
And Child Health Bureau, Office of the Fluoridation

Contractor

Condition - Good

5. The printer will continue to be used by the Fluoridation Contractor.

