

G B R Business Report

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The whole tooth

To the editor:

In an effort to avoid mass hysteria and bring reason and science to the forefront, we would like to address some of the most extreme comments made by the opponents in your recent article regarding fluoridation of Louisiana's water systems ["There's something in the water," Jan. 13].

First, opponents often imply that relatively small amounts of fluoride are toxic. However, an average-sized man [155 pounds] would have to drink at least 625 gallons of water at one time before the fluoride becomes toxic. Irrational and inflammatory comments to the contrary do a horrible disservice to those who are truly seeking sound information and guidance on the safe uses of fluoride.

Second, we believe it is equally irresponsible to assert that "we're just flying blind" and that there is not enough scientific data on public water fluoridation. How then does one account for the literally hundreds of studies that overwhelmingly show the proven benefits far outweigh the perceived risks—not to mention the fact that communities across America have been safely fluoridating their systems for more than 60 years?

Finally, we find it disingenuous of the opponents to claim supporters of community water fluoridation are "worried about legal liability" or that they include those who have "the most to gain by selling it." Supporters of water fluoridation include virtually every dentist and pediatric medical profession in the country. Some of the leading organizations in support include the World Health Organization, U.S. Centers for Disease Control, American Dental Association, American Hospital Association and dozens of other well-respected groups and organizations. Not one of these groups or individuals stands to gain a cent by their support of community water fluoridation. It is simply ludicrous to imply that their support is based on financial considerations or out of the fear of lawsuits.

As your article pointed out, Louisiana lags behind the rest of the country in affording its citizens the benefits of community water fluoridation with East Baton Rouge Parish as the largest piece missing from the puzzle. Your continued attention to factual details will play a great role in encouraging our leaders to "tap into a healthier smile."

Robert E. Barsley
*Professor,
LSU Health Sciences Center School
of Dentistry*

Maurice B. "Marty" Garrett
*President,
Louisiana Dental Association*