



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE  
PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE  
CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL  
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30333

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Minnesota Governor's Commission Reports Fluoridation  
Not Allergenic, Mutagenic, or Carcinogenic

In May 1978, in accordance with a law passed by the Minnesota legislature, the Governor appointed a three-member panel to study the health effects regarding fluoridation of municipal water supplies. The members appointed by the Governor were Chairman Michael K. Steenson, J.D. Professor at William Mitchell College of Law, Peter Dorsen, M.D., and Professor Marion W. Anders, D.V.M., Ph.D.

The Commission met monthly, received much written material, held public hearings, and retained Dr. Ralph Katz, D.M.D., M.P.H., Ph.D., as a consultant to assist in reviewing the various studies. Subsequently, to avoid any potential claim of prejudice when a claim of a possible bias concerning Dr. Katz was raised, the Commission also retained Dr. John Yiamouyiannis of the National Health Federation, as a second consultant. Dr. Yiamouyiannis, co-author of a study on fluoridation and cancer, had appeared as a witness in opposition to fluoridation at the public hearings.

While focusing on potential health hazards, the Commission paid special attention to claims related to carcinogenesis, Down's Syndrome (mongolism), and allergy. The following is the conclusion reached by the Commission in its report submitted on February 26, 1979: "With regard to potential adverse health effects of fluoridation, the Commission finds that the claims that fluoride is allergenic, mutagenic, or carcinogenic are not supported by the preponderance of available scientific data."

The Commission made special reference to a recent decision of Judge Flaherty in issuing a temporary injunction against the West View Water Authority serving fluoridated water to communities in the Pittsburgh area. (This injunction was over-turned by the Commonwealth Court, and the West View Water Authority continues to supply fluoridated water to its customers.) The comments of the Commission on Judge Flaherty's decision are extracted below:

"The Commission is aware of the recent decision of Judge Flaherty in the case of Aitkenhead v. Borough of West View Water Authority, in the Court of Common Pleas of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, Civil Division. Substantially the same body of scientific literature was available to the Commission as to the trial court in Pennsylvania; in addition, the plaintiff's summary of evidence, the defendant's summary of evidence,

Judge Flaherty's opinion, and the transcript of the proceedings were available to the Commission. In ruling in favor of the plaintiff, Judge Flaherty appeared to place primary reliance on the study of Drs. Yiamouyiannis and Burk (1977). Although the Commission has examined the same body of evidence as did Judge Flaherty, the Commission has come to the opposite conclusion; an association between fluoridation and cancer has not been shown."

Dental Disease Prevention Activity  
Bureau of State Services