

**Community Services Report to  
SPC on Community and Protective Services  
2019 July 24**

**ISC: UNRESTRICTED  
CPS2019-0965**

**Response to Water Fluoridation in The City of Calgary**

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In 2019 February, Council directed that an assessment of evidence related to water fluoridation and other dental health interventions be undertaken through the engagement of the University of Calgary's O'Brien Institute for Public Health (OIPH) and other willing and qualified bodies. This report presents the results of that engagement and research review.

Over the past five months, OIPH has conducted a broad and multifaceted examination of research, including that related to the benefits and risks of water fluoridation, to integrated and/or alternative approaches to oral health, and other dimensions of the issue (e.g., ethical/legal, economic, jurisdictional/intergovernmental).

OIPH has consulted with various individuals who have unique perspectives or knowledge on the issue. A number of O'Brien Institute members provided expertise in areas such as: the physician specialty of public health/preventive medicine; population health; dental and oral health; health law; health economics; public policy and governance; endocrinology; neurology and cognition; and aging and dementia. Additionally, the OIPH team met with external knowledge resources to gain additional perspective on the issues.

**ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION:**

That the SPC on Community and Protective Services:

1. Receive the presentation with respect to Report CPS2019-0965 for the Corporate Record; and
2. That Council receive this Report for information.

**RECOMMENDATION OF THE STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES, 2019 OCTOBER 29:**

That Council:

1. Direct Administration to undertake a full cost analysis for the potential reintroduction of fluoride into the water system including ongoing projected operational costs, City's authority and jurisdiction with regard to fluoridation, capital cost and possible utility rate impacts; and
2. Report back directly through the Priorities and Finance Committee no later Q2 2020.

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Excerpt of the Minutes of the 2019 October 29 Standing Policy Committee on Community and Protect Services:

**“Moved by** Councillor Woolley

And further, that the distributions received from the public at today’s meeting be forwarded on with the Report to Council

**MOTION CARRIED”**

**NOTE:** Attachment 2 – **Revised** Public Submissions, letter 40a was distributed in a revised agenda at the Committee meeting. It has now been incorporated into Attachment 2 for Council and is located at the end of the public submissions.

**PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION / POLICY**

On 2019 February 25, Council adopted Notice of Motion C2019-0219 requesting that the O’Brien Institute for Public Health undertake a review of the evidence related to water fluoridation and other dental health interventions, and to report and present these findings to SPC on Community and Protective Services no later than June 2019. Additionally, Council directed that other potential willing and qualified bodies be engaged to similarly assess water fluoridation and other programs to improve dental health, and that any party participating in the inquiry be invited to present their findings at the same time.

**BACKGROUND**

As a result of Council direction in 2011 (UE2011-02), Calgary water treatment plants discontinued the addition of fluoride to the city’s water supply. Since that time, Administration transferred a total of \$750,000 on a one-time basis from the Utilities (Water Resources/Water Services) budget to the Alexandra Community Health Centre (“The Alex”) and to CUPS to support dental health for children living in poverty in accordance with Council’s direction in CPS2012-0446.

**INVESTIGATION: ALTERNATIVES AND ANALYSIS**

At Council’s request, the O’Brien Institute has conducted a broad and multifaceted examination of research, including available studies related to the effectiveness of direct dental interventions, other jurisdictions’ approaches, and the relationship between dental health and other disease vectors.

OIPH has consulted with various individuals with unique perspectives or knowledge on the issue. A number of O’Brien Institute members provided expertise in areas such as: the physician specialty of public health/preventive medicine; population health; dental and oral health; health law; health economics; public policy and governance; endocrinology; neurology and cognition; and aging and dementia. Additionally, Administration and the OIPH team met with external knowledge resources to gain additional perspective on the issues.

The O’Brien Report (*Community Water Fluoridation: A Report for Calgary City Council*) is included as Attachment 1.

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Additional correspondence, including a review coordinated by Safe Water Calgary, is included in Attachment 2.

### **Stakeholder Engagement, Research and Communication**

In preparing the report, members of the O'Brien Institute for Public Health research team have held individual interviews with interested Council members, as requested in C2019-0219. These meetings provided an opportunity for Councillors to expand on any comments or questions raised during the 2019 February 25 meeting or to identify additional questions or concerns so that they could be investigated and addressed as part of the review.

OIPH also engaged in conversations with a number of other University of Calgary and external individuals with unique perspectives or knowledge to support addressing the topics, questions, and issues identified by Council.

A full list of names and affiliations of all consulted individuals is provided in Attachment 1 (pp. 5-6).

Within Administration, groups from both Utilities and Environmental Protection (Water Services, Water Resources – Planning) and from within Community Services (Calgary Neighbourhoods) were included to ensure they were aware of the progress of the report and to identify any specific input or questions they might have.

### **Strategic Alignment**

This report considers how water fluoridation and other oral health interventions might contribute to A Healthy and Green City.

### **Social, Environmental, Economic (External)**

Possible social, environmental and economic considerations are discussed within Attachment 1 and would be assessed in detail if Administration were to further explore the feasibility of pursuing specific interventions.

### **Financial Capacity**

#### ***Current and Future Operating Budget:***

There are no impacts as a result of the recommendation contained in this report.

#### ***Current and Future Capital Budget:***

There are no impacts as a result of the recommendation contained in this report.

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### Risk Assessment

#### City of Calgary Organizational Risk

As this review was not initiated in connection with any related capital or other projects, there are no identified City impacts or risks associated with the recommendation contained in this report.

#### Risks Related to Water Fluoridation

The O'Brien Institute for Public Health's report on Community Water Fluoridation (Attachment 1) provides a summary of the potential risks of both fluoridating and not fluoridating water as determined by their analysis of the available research.

### **REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S):**

The O'Brien Institute for Public Health's Community Water Fluoridation: A Report for Calgary City Council provides Council with a review of existing literature related to water fluoridation and other dental health interventions. This report synthesizes and summarizes the research, and provides OIPH's high-level observations of its overriding impressions and findings.

Given the current conversation related to budget reductions, Administration has not recommended any future work towards new services, including conducting feasibility studies or developing implementation plans (either related to water fluoridation or other dental health initiatives).

### **ATTACHMENT(S)**

1. Attachment 1 – Community Water Fluoridation: A Report for Calgary City Council (The O'Brien Institute for Public Health)
2. Attachment 2 – **Revised** Public Submissions
3. **Attachment 3 – Distributions received at 2019 October 29 Committee Meeting**
4. **Attachment 4 – Submissions Received After Committee Meeting**
5. **Attachment 5 - New Material provided subsequent to Committee discussions.**