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Press Release

**For Immediate Release
Greenville, IL, April 20, 2010:**

GREENVILLE EARNS HONORABLE MENTION - More Than 460 Illinois Communities Receive Top Honors For Maintaining Fluoride Levels

The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) along with the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) presented fluoridation awards to 462 community water systems for maintaining state mandated fluoride levels every month in 2009.

“Recognized by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as one of the greatest public health achievements of the 20th century, water fluoridation can improve overall oral health for both children and adults,” said Dr. Damon T. Arnold, state public health director. “Fluoride is an important nutrient for strong, healthy teeth and is a safe, cost-effective way to prevent tooth decay. We applaud those communities that maintain levels of fluoride in their water systems and encourage them to continue their efforts.”

Of those recognized: 108 systems earned a commendation for meeting state recommended fluoride levels of 0.9 to 1.2 parts per million for at least five consecutive years; 78 for at least 10 years; 46 for at least 15 years; eight for at least 20 years and three for at least 25 years. Another 106 received honorable mention for meeting state fluoride levels 11 of 12 months in 2009.

“We join public health in congratulating these water supply operators for their diligence in maintaining optimum fluoride levels for the benefit of the public,” said IEPA Director Doug Scott.

Fluoride in drinking water helps improve the quality of life through less tooth decay; reduced time lost from school and work; and less money spent to restore, remove or replace decayed teeth. In Illinois, 99 percent of those served by public water systems receive the benefit of fluoridated drinking water, compared to the current national average of 72 percent. Fluoride is found naturally in water, but in many communities the amount of the mineral is too low and does not meet the required standards. Water operators will add fluoride to fulfill optimal health benefits to the communities. Of the 1,850 water supplies in Illinois, 853 systems adjust fluoride levels.

Illinois communities have practiced water fluoridation for more than 60 years and fluoride continues to prove beneficial in the battle against tooth decay. In fact, drinking fluoridated water from birth can reduce tooth decay by 40 to 65 percent.

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