

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

United Concordia Sponsors 60th Anniversary Celebration of Community Water Fluoridation

HARRISBURG, Pa. (June 28, 2005)— United Concordia announced today that it will be a Diamond Patron sponsor of the 2005 National Fluoridation Symposium being held by the American Dental Association (ADA). Community water fluoridation, cited as one of 10 great public health achievements of the 20th century by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), celebrates its 60th birthday this year.

In recognition of this public health milestone, United Concordia helped sponsor a National Fluoridation Symposium to be held at the ADA headquarters in Chicago from July 13–July 16, 2005. The symposium will address the importance community water fluoridation has had on improving oral health as well as overall health in the last 60 years.

"Fluoridation is an important factor in preventing tooth decay and maintaining good oral health," said Karen Whitesel, United Concordia corporate vice president of professional relations and product development. "Because it reaches all people in a community regardless of education or income, it is a powerful tool in the efforts to provide preventive oral health care to all U.S. citizens. United Concordia is proud to sponsor this event and supports the efforts of the ADA to provide fluoridation to those who are not currently enjoying its benefits."

The ADA's approach to community water fluoridation

The American Dental Association has long endorsed community water fluoridation as safe, effective and necessary in preventing tooth decay. This support has been the Association's position since policy was first adopted in 1950. The ADA, along with state and local dental societies, continues to work with federal, state, and local agencies to increase the number of communities benefiting from optimally fluoridated water. The ADA has developed a number of information resources, including the *Fluoridation Facts* booklet, videos, electronic presentations and resource kits. For more information and to view the entire ADA resource list, visit the ADA's "Fluoride and Fluoridation" Web site at <http://www.ada.org/goto/fluoride>.*

Key Facts About Community Water Fluoridation

- Water fluoridation is the addition of fluoride to adjust the natural concentration of a community's water supply to the level recommended by the U.S. Public Health Service for optimal dental health—0.7 to 1.2 parts per million (equivalent to about 1 inch in 16 miles or 1 cent in \$10,000).
- Dental caries, commonly known as tooth decay or cavities, is an infectious multifactorial disease in which acid from bacteria dissolve the enamel of a tooth. This often results in pain and loss of tooth structure. Fluoride works by facilitating remineralization of the tooth's enamel, keeping the tooth strong by preventing the loss of minerals from the enamel as well as by enhancing the re-uptake of minerals into the tooth.
- Fluoridation of the public water supply was first instituted on January 25, 1945, in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Studies in eight communities (four implemented fluoridation and four did not) comparing rates of tooth decay documented persuasive evidence of its effectiveness in decreasing tooth decay in children. As a result, other U.S. cities rapidly adopted this preventive intervention.

- A recent review by the U.S. Task Force on Community Preventive Services strongly recommended community water fluoridation. For the many studies reviewed, there was a median 29% reduction of decay among children and adolescents.
- Community water fluoridation benefits everyone, especially those without access to regular dental care. It is the most efficient way to prevent one of the most common childhood diseases – tooth decay (5 times as common as asthma and 7 times as common as hay fever in 5-to-17-year-olds). Without fluoridation, there would be many more than the estimated 51 million school hours lost per year in this country because of dental-related illness.
- Currently, 67% of Americans on public water systems receive optimally fluoridated water.
- Fluoridation is cost effective. For most U.S. communities, every dollar spent on community water fluoridation results in a savings of \$38 in costs to repair (fill) a decayed tooth.

About United Concordia

United Concordia Companies, Inc., headquartered in Harrisburg, Pa., is the one of the nation's largest dental insurers, with more than 6.5 million members worldwide. In 2004, United Concordia processed more than 11 million claims and attained revenues of \$1 billion. For more information about United Concordia, visit www.unitedconcordia.com

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