

PUBLIC HEALTH & PREVENTIVE MEDICINE

GRAND ROUNDS

Sponsored by: The Division of Health Services Research

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12 PM-1 PM

School of Nursing

3455 SW US Veterans Hospital Rd., Auditorium, room 144

Shall Portland Fluoridate its Drinking Water Supply? Health Benefits and Social Justice over Controversy

ABSTRACT

On May 21, 2013, voters in Portland will determine whether the city will join most other large cities in the USA in providing its population with what CDC has called one of the ten great public health achievements in the 20th century, fluoridation of drinking water. Fluoridation of drinking water began in 1945 and in 2011 reached an estimated 200 million persons in the United States. Fluoridation safely and inexpensively benefits both children and adults by effectively preventing tooth decay, regardless of socioeconomic status or access to care. During several decades, fluoridation has played an important role in the reductions in tooth decay (40%-70% in children) and of tooth loss in adults (40%-60%). But in spite of these positive developments tooth decay is still affecting Oregonians throughout their lives causing pain and suffering, and school absenteeism in children and unnecessary visits to the emergency room as well as tooth loss in adults. Among all the states in the nation Oregon has the 5th highest proportion of 3rd grade children with tooth decay experience and untreated decay. More than half of 1st and 3rd grade children in the three Metro counties have experienced tooth decay, and the relationship to social determinants is strong. In addition to highlighting some of the evidence for the benefits of water fluoridation the presentation will mention some of the more prominent controversies around water fluoridation.

Food and beverages will be provided.