

## **Public Water Supply Section Position Statement Regarding EPA/HHS Fluoride Announcement**

February 2, 2011

The purpose of this position statement is to address inquiries regarding the Public Water Supply Section's response to the January 7, 2011, announcement by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to propose a recommendation of 0.7 mg/l of fluoride in treated water to replace the current federal recommended range of 0.7 to 1.2 mg/l.

The announcement stated that:

“The notice of the proposed recommendation will be published in the Federal Register soon and HHS will accept comments from the public and stakeholders on the proposed recommendation for 30 days,” and “HHS is expecting to publish final guidance for community water fluoridation by spring 2011.”

Currently the *North Carolina Rules Governing Public Water Systems* (Section .1400) require a community public water system to obtain approval from the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to fluoridate its water supply. Further, the rules require that the approved fluoride treatment be operated in accordance with the rules in Section .1400. Rule .1406 Control of Treatment Process states that “The treatment process shall result in the adjustment of fluoride ion (F) in the treated water to 1.0 mg/liter.” This rule was established under the current HHS recommended range of 0.7 to 1.2 mg/l.

In light of the current proposed change in the HHS recommendation to 0.7 mg/l, the Public Water Supply Section in the Division of Environmental Health understands that some community public water systems in North Carolina want to now lower the fluoride ion (F) concentration in their treated water to 0.7 mg/l.

The goal of fluoride treatment is to add enough fluoride to prevent tooth decay while avoiding the unwanted health effects from too much fluoride. Considering that the proposed recommendation of 0.7 mg/l is, according to EPA and HHS, based on “most up to date scientific data,” the Public Water Supply Section does not intend to pursue action if any system chooses to adjust their treatment process to achieve a fluoride ion (F) concentration in treated water in the range from 0.7 to 1.0 mg/l.

The Public Water Supply Section will consider making appropriate changes to the rules in Section .1400 based on any new recommendations from HHS and in consultation with the State Health Director.