

Fluoridation: Follow the Money

By Carol Kopf, Media Director, Fluoride Action Network

Multi-billion dollar international conglomerates, which benefit from tooth decay and fluoride sales, pour money into organized dentistry which is behind virtually every fluoridation initiative.

The American Dental Association (ADA), many of its over 250 constituent state and city associations are benefactors along with other fluoridation-promoting dental groups and schools.

Dentists, inside and outside of government and industry, seem to have vast amounts of money and influence to promote fluoridation. Where does it come from?

The ADA and the ADA Foundation received over \$28 million from pharmaceutical companies, dental equipment manufacturers and insurance companies, from 2006 – 2009, according to a January 20, 2010, [letter from the ADA's Chief Financial Officer to U.S. Senator Charles Grassley](#).

Grassley wants more accountability and transparency between the ADA and industry. The ADA didn't comply with Grassley's request to publish its corporate funders on its website. However, Grassley listed them on his own website:

<http://www.grassley.senate.gov/about/upload/American-Dental-Association.pdf>

Fluoride-selling pharmaceutical giants listed include: Colgate, GlaxoSmithKline, Johnson & Johnson, Procter & Gamble, Pfizer, and others.

ADA's Seal of Acceptance

Several companies on Grassley's list paid a "Seal Program Maintenance Fee," totaling \$574,000 for four years (2006-2009).

The ADA requires a one-time, non-refundable submission fee before reviewing over-the-counter products (\$14,500 per product). If given the ADA's Seal of Acceptance, they are required to pay an annual maintenance fee of \$3,500 per product, according to Jan Lord, Manager, Acceptance Program, ADA's Council on Scientific Affairs.

Approximately, 260 items appear on the ADA's current Accepted "[Shopping List](#)." A large number are fluoride products.

More Legal Financial Exchanges between the ADA and Industry

Sometimes the ADA joins into "Cause-Related-Marketing" with for-profit companies. The ADA gives an example: the William Wrigley Company agreed to donate a percentage of its ADA Accepted chewing gum products to the ADA's Give Kids A Smile program, according to *Guidelines Governing the American Dental Association's Corporate Relationships*.

Wrigley paid the ADA \$36,000 to review some of Wrigley's sugar-free chewing gum studies to get the ADA's Seal of Acceptance, according to [CNN's Dr. Sanjay Gupta](#). Gupta writes, "The ADA stands by its seal and told us any company can apply for the seal, as long as the company pays for it."

Johnson & Johnson gave \$900,000 to fund the ADA's annual session's distinguished speaker series (2006-2009).

In 2007, Barbara Walters and Lance Armstrong Headlined the ADA's [Distinguished Speaker Series](#).

Many prominent journalists and politicians have been paid to speak at ADA conventions. In 2013 former President Bill Clinton was the main event. Some might say it's a good way to buy influence.

Colgate funds the [ADA research institute newly renamed after dentist Anthony R. Volpe](#), who recently retired as Vice President of Clinical Research and Scientific Affairs at Colgate-Palmolive Company.

Colgate's Volpe and a Henry Schein, Inc. representative serve on the Board of Directors of Forsyth Institute which bills itself as "the only independent research institute in America specializing in oral health and its impact on overall wellness." The Forsyth Institute is where Dr. Phyllis Mullenix performed research that found fluoride can cause brain deficits in rodents. Mullenix was fired for publishing her results in a peer-reviewed, respected journal (1), against the orders of her Forsyth boss, as explained in the first chapter of Chris Bryson's "[The Fluoride Deception](#)."

Members of the dental industry are on Boards of Directors for Dental Schools, other fluoridation promoting groups such as the [Children's Dental Health Project](#), [Oral Health America](#), Dental product manufacturers are even [Friends of the National Institutes of Dental Research](#).

At the forefront of most fluoridation initiatives are well-meaning but mis-guided dentists who fail to read the literature and are fueled only by the endorsements of dentists at the CDC's Oral Health Division, or endorsements by dental organizations, or endorsements lobbied by dentists or from other groups and associations. Industry-funded dental groups even [lobbied the Surgeon General](#) until she finally caved in and endorsed fluoridation.

Dental Schools are corporation-subsidized

Henry Schein, Inc., the largest distributor of healthcare products and services to office-based practitioners gave the New York University Dental School a [six figure gift in 2000](#) and a [million dollars the year before](#).

The New York University Donor Honor Roll reveals that Colgate-Palmolive Company and Nobel Biocare USA, Inc [gave from \\$1 to 4\\$ million](#) (2011-2012).

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

If a community elects to stop fluoridation, invariably a dentist and his posse shows up intimidating legislators into re-starting fluoridation. As ammunition, they state: "CDC has recognized water fluoridation as one of the 10 great public health achievements of the 20th century."

That statement may sound impressive. However, it has been promoted by the CDC's Oral Health Division, who are paid to promote fluoridation. The CDC also says, "It is not CDC's task to determine what levels of fluoride in water are safe." (see 2nd paragraph, 2nd sentence: <http://www.cdc.gov/fluoridation/safety/>)

The CDC's Oral Health Division may be a stepping stone into a more lucrative career promoting fluoridation for outside interests. When forced to defend fluoridation with words and not hide behind catch-phrases and government credentials, two former CDC Oral Health Division Directors fell short.

a) Dentist William Kohn, former director of the CDC's Division of Oral Health until Feb 2011 - Now with Delta Dental, a dental "insurance" company that strongly supports fluoridation financially, Kohn does a poor job of convincing anyone to endorse fluoridation in a series of Delta Dental YouTube videos. I'll bet he makes way more money in his new job.

b) Dentist William Mass, CDC's previous Oral Health Director retired January 2010 from the CDC. But, [in 2009, Dr. Maas was assigned by CDC to serve as an advisor to the Pew Children's Dental Campaign](#). Maas was equally impotent when asked to defend fluoridation before a county legislature in 2013 in his new job for the billion-dollar Pew Foundation's (renamed) Dental Policy group. Under his guidance, Pew fluoridation initiatives in Portland, Oregon and Wichita, Kansas failed when voters rejected fluoridation 60% to 40% despite the vast amount of money spent trying to convince them to swallow the fluoride.

Dentists Doing Very Well, Thank You, Despite Fluoridation

Fluoridation hasn't hurt dentistry's bottom line at all. In fact, dentistry is big business today despite 7 decades of water fluoridation and a glut of fluoridated dental products. Americans spent about [\\$108 billion on dentists in 2011](#), an inflation-adjusted increase from \$64 billion in 1996, according to the General Accounting Office. But a dental crisis still exists.

Since fluoridation doesn't reduce tooth decay, whose best interests are served by protecting fluoride's image?

- The Global Toothpaste Market is expected to reach \$12.6 billion by 2015, according [Global Industry Analysts, Inc.](#)

And, as you know, toothpaste isn't the only fluoridated dental product on the market.

- The global dental equipment market is predicted to exhibit a [compound annual growth rate of 9% to reach over \\$13 billion by 2016.](#)
- [Cosmetic dentistry continues to surge](#) with an annual U.S. expenditure of \$2.75 billion.

Fluoridation has created a lucrative new market for cosmetic dentistry. Fluoride-overdose symptoms, dental fluorosis (discolored teeth) has increased in incidence and severity over the years. WebMD writes, "Although fluorosis is not a disease, its effects can be psychologically distressing and difficult to treat. Parental vigilance can play an important role in preventing fluorosis."

Sales of fluoride varnish are soaring as organized dentistry lobbied legislators to increase, require or allow their use among more practitioners – even though the varnish contains a hugely toxic 22,600 parts per million fluoride and has [never been FDA approved](#) for cavity reduction or safety tested.

Money is Power

Why does the ADA need so much money? Money is power in American politics. The ADA's Political Action Committee is considered a Heavy Hitter by the [Center for Responsive Politics.](#)

In the last cycle, the ADA gave Congressional representatives \$302,500 and Senators \$48,500.

It seems that organized dentistry lobbies mostly for laws that benefit their member dentists. Some legislation masquerades as a public benefit. Fluoridation wears such a mask.

- The New York State Dental Association brags about its legislative victories on its [website.](#)
- [The New York Times](#) reported about the NY Dental Association's political clout and sleazy politicking, in 2008.
- The Greater New York Dental Meeting which is [billed as the largest dental conference in the country generates millions of dollars.](#) Exhibitors look like a [who's who in the dental industry.](#)

Healthy Diets Make Healthy Teeth without Fluoride

Even the ADA admits good dental health begins in the womb. It's important for pregnant women to receive sufficient amounts of tooth-building nutrients, [including calcium, protein, phosphorous and vitamins A, C and D](#) But dentists are mostly focused on fluoride, a drug with adverse side effects, that is not even essential for healthy teeth.

But there's no money in selling nutrients and healthy eating.

So it's not surprising that the U.S. is experiencing a tooth decay epidemic along with a fluoride-overdose epidemic. Up to [60% of adolescents](#) have dental fluorosis. Yet [51% of them have tooth decay.](#)

Who's in Charge?

The CDC is not responsible for fluoridation safety. The FDA regulates fluoride as a drug for topical application and considers ingested fluoride such as fluoride supplements, an unapproved drug. The EPA regulates fluoride in water supplies as a contaminant. Organized dentistry, fueled by corporate cash, protects fluoride's image and promotes fluoridation.

So Why Fluoridation?

The dental crisis America faces today is because dentistry has become a luxury service that most Americans can't afford. 80% of dentists refuse to accept Medicaid patients, 130 million lack dental insurance. Many with dental insurance can't afford dentistry's high out of pocket fees. The answer is simple - legalize Dental Therapists in the US as they have been for decades in other first world countries. They just need 2 or 3 years training to do simple dentistry. They will go into mouths and areas dentists refuse to go. Studies show they are highly effective and more affordable.

However, organization dentistry, with its pockets full of corporate cash, lobby long and hard to keep affordable dentistry an oxymoron in the US. Dentists lobby against dental therapists because, some say, they infringe upon dentists lucrative monopoly.

Reference:

1. Mullenix PJ, Denbesten PK, Schunior A, Kernan WJ. 1996. Neurotoxicity of Sodium Fluoride in Rats. *Neurotoxicol Teratol.* 1995 Mar-Apr;17(2):169-77.

Source:

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