



# Dickinson-Iron District Health Department

## Dickinson County

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## School Fluoride Rinse Program

Kingsford and Iron River, MI, August 5, 2015 - With the new school year about to start, local health departments want to remind parents about the new fluoride rinse program being offered at schools across the U.P.

State statistics show that U.P. third grade students have more dental decay than third grade students from the lower peninsula, including Detroit. The U.P. Wide Smiles project is implementing school fluoride mouthrinse programs across U.P. elementary schools to improve the smiles and dental health of our children.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) fluoridated water supplies are the single most effective public health measure to prevent tooth decay. The CDC has proclaimed community water fluoridation one of the 10 greatest public health achievements of the 20th century.

It may be hard to believe but many U.P. children do not have access to dental products containing fluoride. Some of the children don't own a toothbrush. Moreover, many U.P. children don't have access to fluoridated water because they live in places without fluoridated municipal water or because their homes have well water. In addition, many families today are "on the go" and grab bottled water to drink. And most bottled water doesn't contain significant amounts of fluoride. These children and families are missing out on the benefits of fluoridated water.

To level the playing field when it comes to fluoride, the U.P. Wide Smiles project will be offering all U.P. schools who serve children in Kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade, help in setting up fluoride rinse programs. Some U.P. elementary schools have been successfully offering this program for years, with the help of parent volunteers, aides, and teachers during the school year.

Parental approval must be obtained for each child to participate in the weekly fluoride mouth rinse program. Once the consent is signed and returned to the school, each student that has permission will rinse his/her mouth in school with a fluoride rinse for one minute, once a week, under adult supervision. This short process is done every week throughout the school year. We use great flavors too such as bubble gum, root beer, grape, raspberry, and mint!

Regular rinsing with a fluoride mouthrinse is an effective means of preventing tooth decay. Research has shown a 30% decrease in the incidence of tooth decay for students rinsing weekly with fluoride. This program is enthusiastically endorsed by area dentists, the American Dental Association and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. Although effective, this program is not considered a substitute for daily brushing and flossing or regular dental visits. Children (and parents) are encouraged to visit their dentist and practice good oral hygiene habits.

If you are the parent of an elementary school child in the U.P., this exciting new program to boost your child's oral health, may be coming soon to your school! If you have any questions regarding this program, please call Kelly Rumpf at (906) 779-7234.

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