

# Portland and Fluoridation 2013: Hindsight is 20-20

By Kurt Ferré DDS

OPHA annual meeting, Corvallis, OR

October 14, 2013

# Upstream Public Health



L: Mel Rader R: Raquel  
Bournhonesque

# Healthy Kids, Healthy Portland

- Everyone Deserves Healthy Teeth Coalition
- Coalition of over 100 organizations
- City Council voted 5-0, Multnomah County Commissioners also vote 5-0 in favor
- Endorsement of 6 newspapers
- City Club of Portland vote over 90% in favor
- Much deeper financial pockets than CWP and mostly in state funding

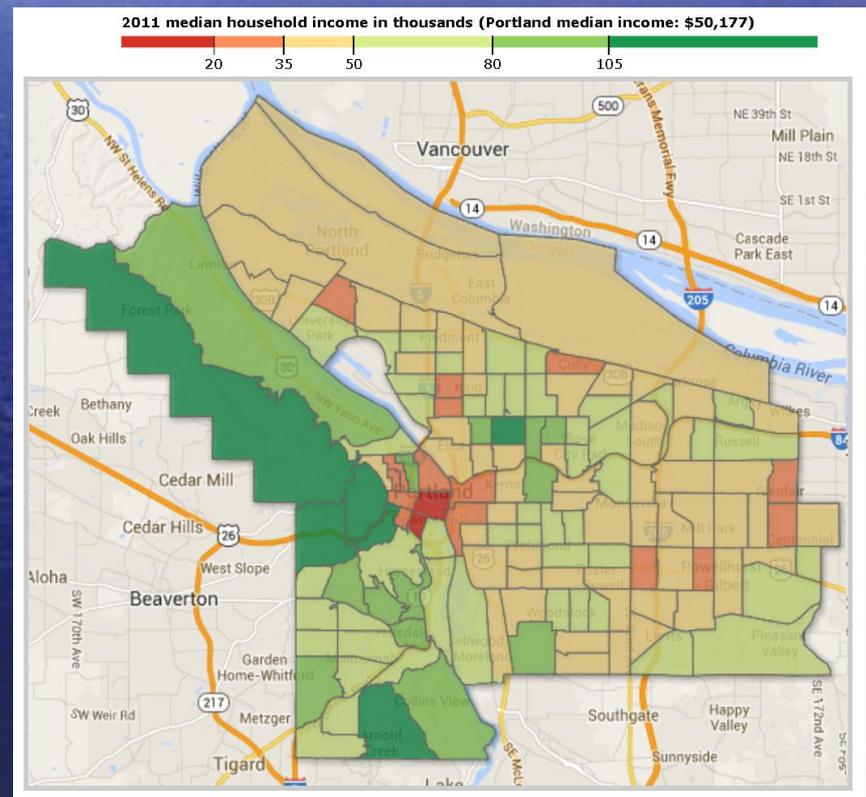
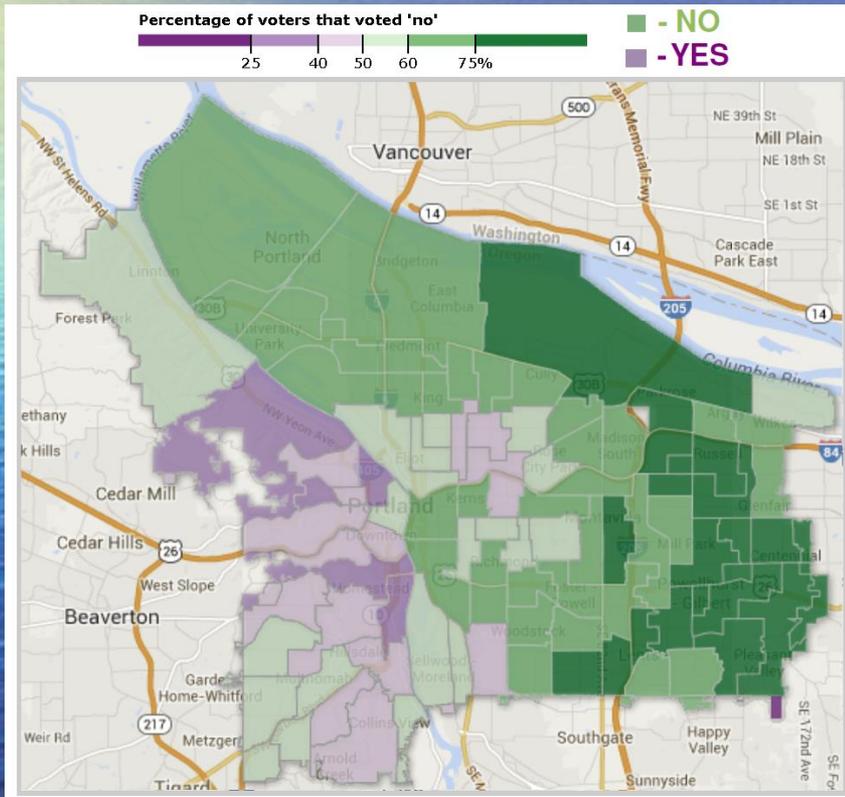
# Clean Water Portland

- Very few endorsements:  
Sierra Club: Columbia chapter  
Columbia Riverkeepers  
Dave's Killer Bread  
Voodoo Donuts  
& a few crappy indy bands
- Much of their funding came from out of state/right wing organizations

# Fluoridation Vote Results

- 26-151 - City of Portland Vote
  - Yes . . . 64,728 = 39.40 %
  - No. . . . 99,573 = 60.60 %
- 42% of registered voters actually voted
- There are 391,193 registered voters in PDX
- 25% of registered voters decided outcome
- 226,892 voters didn't care to vote.

# Portland Vote by Precinct



# 3 Key Observations

- It's much easier to scare the public than to un-scare the public.
- The support for fluoridation is a mile wide, but the passion is an inch deep while the opposition support is an inch wide,.....
- Our belief system is a product of our life experiences and leads to our own confirmation biases.

# Healthy Kids, Healthy Portland

- Timing
- Messaging
- Visibility
- Future for Fluoridation in Oregon

# Timing of the Campaign

- Early polls showed 54% in favor of fluoridation
- Bringing this forward to a lame-duck City Council
- Thought that getting 20K signatures wouldn't be easy to do.
- The transition from EDHTC to HKHP was slow.
- The vote was held in a May special election.
- The NWHF, our biggest campaign contributor, had a "limited investment" in the early planning.

# Messaging in the Campaign

- PDX's fluoridation campaign was different from a normal political campaign.
- Using the OR Smile Survey was a mistake to demonstrate an "Oral Health Crisis" in PDX
- Once a referendum, OHSU medical, dental, and research experts could not participate in a political campaign.
- HKHP lost the young voters and didn't adequately target the senior vote.

# Public Visibility of Campaign

- CWP lawn signs were up 2 weeks earlier
- CWP canvassed earlier than HKHP
- CWP volunteers in T-shirts were much more visible than HKHP's volunteers.
- CWP filled the audience space for two ill-advised debates.
- Lack of dental office participation

# Clean Water Portland Mailer

**This May, You Will Decide –**  
**Will Portlanders Drink Clean Water**  
**or Fluoridation Chemicals?**



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For more information visit:  
**CleanWaterPortland.org**  
Take the Vote NO Pledge at  
**CleanWaterPortland.org/voteno**

**Vote NO** on **Fluoridation**  
**Chemicals**

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# Healthy Kids, Healthy PDX Mailer



Paid for by Healthy Kids, Healthy Portland  
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[HealthyKidsHealthyPortland.org](http://HealthyKidsHealthyPortland.org)



There's a lot being said about fluoride, but those who have really studied the issue agree:

**Doctors, pediatricians and more than 100 health and community organizations say**



**VOTE YES on water fluoridation!**

**And so does every Portland newspaper that has made a choice:**

The Oregonian



Portland Tribune

the Portland MERCURY

THE SCANNER

street roots

# Future of Fluoridation in Oregon

- Since October, 2010, these cities have retained fluoridation: Keizer, McMinnville, Lewiston, ID, Bethel, AK, Bozeman, MT, Philomath, Scappoose, & The Dalles
- There are 2 OR cities that are interested in fluoridation.
- Formation of an OR Fluoridation Task Force



Got Teeth



Get Fluoride

Fluoride

Ride for F