

February 10, 2026

To: Lincoln-Lancaster County Board of Health Meeting  
From: Tracy Aksamit, Lincoln

Board members,

Like virtually everyone, I value disease prevention and efforts to reduce tooth decay. Likewise, I value transparently seeking common ground and understanding on difficult topics.

In the spirit of finding common ground on the benefits and risks of fluoridated drinking water, I would like to see three things happen in Lincoln:

First, I would like to see Lincoln's operational, minimum fluoride treatment level for drinking water reduced to as low as reasonably achievable, to 0.6 ppm. Functionally, this minimum would align with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's lowest recommended level for preventing tooth decay while also further reducing the risks of fluoride overexposure to our most vulnerable.

Operationally, at just 2 points above Lincoln's naturally occurring fluoride level of about 0.4 ppm, a minimum 0.6 ppm is well within Nebraska's revised regulation. And, based on Lincoln's water treatment reports for 2022 through 2024, LTU appears quite able to accommodate an industry accepted treatment range between about 0.6 and 0.7 ppm.

As you may know, Nebraska's fluoride treatment level was lowered in January of last year to align with the U.S. Public Health Service's 2015 recommendation, which they had implemented to address increasing incidents of fluorosis, a condition that ranges from mild cosmetic dental discoloration to more advanced, systemic disease. For this reason, I would like to see a cautionary notice added to the annual water quality report to alert people to fluoride specific risk of overexposure. In that fluoride is additive, like chloramines, the chemical is a supplement to Lincoln's water. It deserves a special mention because, while there is some reference in oral health materials, a notice in the water report would reach people not focusing specifically on dental health. Until recently, I didn't know some teas, even some herbals, have a very high fluoride content. It would also be great to see the special health section of the annual report moved back up to page 2.

Finally, I would like to see the importance of tooth decay highlighted. Last year Nebraska dentists, Drs. Jessica Meeske and Scott Morrison, and other medical professionals, testified that tooth decay is the most common chronic disease in children and adults, five times more common than asthma. I would like to see this significant condition reflected in several areas: by adding tooth decay as a disease condition to all significant health surveys, like Lincoln's Community Health Assessment, by regularly monitoring and reporting the status of decay incidents and Medicaid-related county costs. And at a policy level, I would like to see a resolve that inclusively reflects the core, diverse values and concerns of our community and simple measurable outcomes. For me, this would include providing the perspective of skilled, holistically-focused, professionals, like dentist Dr. Trino Nuño, of Omaha.

So to quickly review, I would like to see the treatment level reduced to 0.6 ppm, a fluoride-related cautionary notice added to the water report, and a resolve reflecting our diverse community values, expanding capacity to prevent disease.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.