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Clear as mud

Waterloo Chronicle Editorial

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If the presentation made to regional council was supposed to answer all of the questions surrounding the recent fluoridation foul up, it didn't.

What we have here is a failure to communicate. That was the premise of the memo — water officials weren't aware of all their reporting obligations to the region's Public Health department.

The Public Health department in turn left the citizens of Waterloo in the dark for almost a year about a breakdown of the water fluoridation system that meant the majority of the city was not getting that treated water.

They promised to do better next time. But if there was a failure to communicate in this situation, where else do these two departments have their wires crossed?

These are the types of problems that were supposed to be solved after the Walkerton water crisis. Public health officials and water operators were supposed to be on the same page when it comes to what goes into the water, and when to report a problem.

There also should have been a little more sensitivity around this issue with a debate raging in this city about whether it wants to continue the practice of water fluoridation or not.

Waterloo will be holding a plebiscite next fall to answer that very question, and now confidence in the fluoridation system is shaken by this oversight.

While the water operators took much of the blame in the memo for not knowing the regulations required of public health, why didn't the health department actively investigate the pace of the repairs?

As it stands 60 per cent of the city is still without fluoridated water. And the costs to fix it are mounting.

It's left some people wondering whether they should bother turning it back on at all.

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