



## Fluoride debate has no takers at Royal College

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A local anti-water fluoridation group expecting a response to an open letter sent to the Royal College of Dental Surgeons in August will be waiting for a long time.

In August, Robert Fleming of WaterlooWatch sent a two-page letter to the quasi-judicial body that regulates and licenses Ontario dentists and sets professional standards for the industry.

He took the organization to task for its continued support of water fluoridation and asked for the source science behind the organization's public policy position adopted in 2003.

Fleming said what drove him to ask the Royal College of Dental Surgeons to produce that documentation was the group's president, Frank Stechey, and the presentations he made to two other communities that have recently debated water fluoridation — Hamilton and Thunder Bay.

"What I think is remarkable is the enthusiasm demonstrated by the dentists and the Royal College in promoting water fluoridation, and the chasing down of any community that even raises the possibility of discussing fluoridation," said Fleming. "But when you ask them a question, and they profess to have the answers ... why the delay?"

Peggi Mace, a spokesperson for the College, said in an e-mail response to the Waterloo Chronicle that the organization is not interested in engaging WaterlooWatch in this type of public forum.

The College has only made formal presentations in the past to the city and town councils at the request of community members. She reinforced the College's position that these decisions should be made by the community.

Mace referred people interested in the College's formal position to its website at [www.rcdo.org](http://www.rcdo.org). It's a position that was adopted at board of directors meeting in 2003 and open to the public as required by law.

Mace agreed to try to get the answers to a list of questions the Chronicle submitted to the College regarding water fluoridation, but those written responses weren't available at press time.

But Fleming isn't satisfied with the absence of answers when he makes what he thinks is a simple request.

If the source science supports the College's position, it could put to rest the debate the city faces as it heads into a plebiscite during the 2010 municipal election.

"No matter what answer the Royal College gives to this request, its delay is conspicuous and incongruous to what is going on in the province," said Fleming. "It speaks to the fact that water fluoridation in this province is based more on opinion, endorsement and marketing and is devoid of scientific proof.

"That is appalling and citizens deserve better than that."

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