



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH

ROY COOPER  
GOVERNOR

MANDY COHEN, MD, MPH  
SECRETARY

DANIEL STALEY  
DIRECTOR

February 17, 2017

John Young, Chair  
OWASA Board  
400 Jones Ferry Road  
Carrboro, NC 27510

Dear John Young and OWASA Board,

As members of the state dental office, we want to commend the work of the OWASA water technicians. The Orange County Water and Sewer Authority (OWASA) and Orange County Health Department faced difficult challenges recently.

1. A mechanical failure the afternoon of February 2<sup>nd</sup> caused a fluoride overfeed within the Jones Ferry Road Water Treatment Plant. This was quickly discovered and steps were taken that same afternoon to prevent any water from leaving the plant and entering the distribution system supplying OWASA customers.
2. The next day, a twelve-inch water main near Dobbins Drive in Chapel Hill ruptured causing severely low water levels throughout the system. Steps were taken by the Orange County Health Department to insure public safety and community efforts were also made to provide bottled drinking water to affected citizens while OWASA made repairs.

By February 4<sup>th</sup> the public water distribution system had been supplied by neighboring water systems, tested, and found safe for the public to use. This is an excellent example where diligent monitoring of crucial systems and rapid action by dedicated people prevented some of the most adverse events that could occur in a public water system from endangering the public.

Community Water Fluoridation is one of the most important methods to prevent tooth decay in children and adults. It is safe, and equitably distributed to all members of a community. We ask that you continue this important and cost effective public health practice.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Sarah Tomlinson in blue ink.

Sarah Tomlinson, DDS  
Oral Health Section, Chief

Handwritten signature of Michael Tencza in blue ink.

Michael Tencza, DDS, PhD  
Public Health Residency Admin.

Handwritten signature of Debbye Krueger in blue ink.

Debbye Krueger, RDH, BS, FAADH  
NC Fluoridation Coordinator