On 16th February 2011, High Court Judge Edward Holman refused an application by Mrs Geraldine Milner for a judicial review of SCSHA’s 2009 decision to implement water fluoridation. The application argued that South Central Strategic Health Authority (SCSHA) failed to properly consider all the evidence and should not have ignored public opinion in making its decision to go ahead with its fluoridation plans. Subsequently, Mrs Milner has appealed to the Appeals Court against Judge Holman’s decision not to allow her legal challenge. It will be 2 months before we learn whether or not she has been granted leave to appeal and a further 4+ months before an appeal can be heard. In the meantime, people living in Southampton and south-west Hampshire continue to live in stasis.

An area of uncertainty is whether or not SCSHA is legally permitted to initiate fluoridation whilst waiting for an appeal to be accepted and heard. The SCSHA seems to think that it can, as evidenced by a letter from Andrea Young, CE of SCSHA, which was recently received by Councillor Pat West, the Chair of Hampshire County Council’s Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The letter makes it perfectly clear that the SHA does indeed plan to implement fluoridation without delay.

“Following the unanimous South Central Strategic Health Authority Board decision and the result of the Judicial Review, we are now planning to implement the scheme. We will put a project in place that will specify the stages required in the next few months and will ensure key stakeholders are aware of the scheme”

This is clearly outrageous and against the will of those affected and therefore deeply immoral and contrary to medical ethics’ principles.

It is also a waste of scarce money. The politicians must deliver on their promises to stop the SHA, firstly by denying funding from the Department of Health. The DH did promise to subsidise the implementation of water fluoridation back in 2008, but that budget was only available for three years and runs out on the 31st March 2011. It must not be renewed and the SHA must be forced to waste their own money (or more accurately our taxpayers’ money) rather than being subsidised from DH budgets.

Water fluoridation causes damage to the enamel of permanent teeth from Dental Fluorosis. The incidence of DF is far greater than the incidence of dental caries in
young children. Such widespread damage to teeth (the disbenefits) argues against forcing compulsory medication on an unwilling population when the benefits are puny. The health service must recognise Dental Fluorosis as being much more than ‘cosmetic’ damage and pay the thousands of pounds per person for private dental treatment to deal with the dental fluorosis caused by an unwise NHS intervention. They must also recognise that Dental Fluorosis is the main visible damage from fluoride poisoning and recompense people for the health damage it causes bioaccumulatively, throughout the body. Surely, more than enough detailed scientific evidence has been provided in the past by groups such as Hampshire Against Fluoridation. Again, why is the disclaimer by the York Review research team being ignored by SCSHA? The message is clear: people’s general health suffers from fluoride in the water – an ironic situation since SCSHA’s motto is “Towards a healthier future”.

It is outrageous for the letter from the SHA to talk about the ‘hundreds of children per year’ needing ‘general anaesthetic for the extraction of diseased teeth’ as if this has anything to do with fluoridation at all. It does not. Many of the extractions are due to ‘bottle caries’ and gum disease, neither of which can be prevented by fluoridation.

Who is going to stop this illogical, unethical and deeply anti-democratic Strategic Health Authority? The politicians? Or does it have to be mass action - people power?

1. See next page for the scanned SCSHA letter.

March 2011

Cllr Pat West
Chairman, Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Room 102, Chief Executives Department
Hampshire County Council
The Castle
Winchester
Hampshire
SO23 8UJ

Dear Cllr West

Proposals to add fluoride to drinking water in Southampton and parts of south west Hampshire

Thank you for your letter dated 17 February regarding the proposals to add fluoride to the drinking water in Southampton and south west Hampshire. Following the unanimous South Central Strategic Health Authority Board decision and the result of the judicial review, we are now planning to implement the scheme. We will put a project in place that will specify the stages required in the next few months, and will ensure key stakeholders are aware of the plan.

The dental health of children in the Southampton area remains poor as it has been previously. Hundreds of children a year still require a general anaesthetic for the extraction of diseased teeth and we believe that there is still a need for water fluoridation.

As part of the project, we will be working with Southern Water to get a final agreement on the costs of the scheme. We will review this information with the Department of Health.

We strongly support the move of public health to local authorities and look forward to seeing how local authorities will address the health needs of their populations. Our view is that this scheme has been consulted on in accordance with the current legislation and that we are bound to follow through on the results.

I appreciate that this does not accord with the Members’ view you express in your letter, but hope we can continue to engage with you in a positive manner during this year of transition.

Yours sincerely

Andrea Young
Chief Executive
Towards a healthier future...