

New Health NZ Inc.

Media Statement

26 March 2014

Fight to remove fluoride taken to Court of Appeal

New Health NZ Inc has today filed a notice of appeal in the Court of Appeal against the High Court's decision upholding the lawfulness of water fluoridation.

New Health NZ chairman David Sloan says the High Court was wrong to ignore fundamental human rights and its ruling must not be the final word on the issue.

"The judgment, as it stands, has very worrying implications for all New Zealanders. While fluoridation is the only form of mass medication at present, the High Court has effectively paved the way for further such practices," says Mr Sloan.

"A significant number of New Zealanders are already hugely concerned by this issue. Our decision to pursue this case reflects the importance of ensuring we all have the basic human right of choosing what goes into our bodies."

The High Court ruling effectively enables councils to use the water supply to deliver chemicals for therapeutic purposes. Chemicals for the purpose of birth control, mood disorder and vaccination can be legally added to the water supply at the whim of local authorities. The decision also permits public health measures to override individual consent provided they are delivered in a way that does not involve a medical practitioner.

"Based on the High Court ruling, if a person is prescribed 1 mg of fluoride by a medical professional, they are receiving medical treatment. If they consume the same amount through the reticulated water system, they are not receiving medical treatment, just treated water. That distinction is ridiculous," says Mr Sloan.

New Health NZ's view, and the basis of our appeal, is that the fluoride being used in the water supply comes within the definition of a "medicine" under the Medicines Act and that it is "medical treatment" under the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act.

While fluoride works by brushing your teeth with fluoridated toothpaste, it does not work by swallowing it mixed in water. There is no reason to effectively force people to drink fluoridated water.

It is not a well-known fact that the fluoride used in the water supply is a by-product of the superphosphate industry, which as well as containing fluoride contains arsenic, mercury and lead, all of which are harmful to human health.

Bottle-fed babies and infants are particularly exposed to the risk of dental fluorosis. New Zealanders should check their teeth for white specks and mottling. This could be evidence that they have suffered from fluoride poisoning as a child. There is a lawsuit in the USA where an individual is seeking damages for dental fluorosis – Nemphos v Nestle Waters America Inc. Similar cases could possibly be initiated here.

Over-consumption of fluoride also potentially causes other health problems such as skeletal fluorosis, thyroid problems and lowered IQ.

New Health has written to the Ministry of Health asking it to take urgent and immediate steps to regulate the fluoridating chemicals as a medicine. These steps include licensing the manufacturer and having the Minister of Health approve the substances as a “new medicine”.

“Fluoridation is a deeply flawed policy and practice and it is time to consign it to the dustbin of history. The evidence in support of fluoridation is weak. I am confident New Zealanders will soon come to accept the considerable body of reputable scientific evidence that establishes that water fluoridation is far more harmful than its purported benefits,” Mr Sloan says.

ENDS

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