



## Pediatric Dental Specialists

Committed to the duty to provide the best oral health care

September 14, 2011

Honorable Mayor Bob Foster and City Council:

As a representative of the Harbor Dental Society and a dental provider in Long Beach, I am very concerned about the introduction of **Item #16** on next week's city Council agenda. This has to do with the recommendations about silver fillings (amalgam) being banned as a restorative material.

My name is Dr. Santos Cortez. I am a pediatric dentist in Long Beach and have served this community for over 29 years. I am representing the Long Beach Children's Oral Health Task Force as its chairman as well as chairman of the Legislative Committee of the Harbor Dental Society, a component of the California Dental Association and the American Dental Association.

We are opposed to this item for the following reasons:

If the concern about amalgam is patient safety: **SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE SUPPORTS THE SAFETY OF AMALGAM.**

Dental Amalgam is an alloy composed of several metals that when mixed together result in a stable, durable and safe dental material. It is also known as a "silver filling" and has been used in dentistry for over 150 years in hundreds of millions of patients throughout the world. Scientific evidence supports that amalgam is a valuable, viable and safe choice for dental patients- a position also supported by the U.S. Federal Drug Administration.

If the concern is about our environment and water quality, please be aware that dentists are concerned about this as well. The dental profession has developed best practices which dentists use to make sure that old amalgam or excess amalgam is properly recycled or disposed of, through the use of chairside traps and amalgam separators as well as contracting with professional waste-management companies that properly manage dental and medical waste. We are responsible guardians of our environment.

In a city where over fifty percent of our Kindergartners suffer from dental decay, in a city where many of our young citizens depend on safety-net dental clinics or our local children's hospital to obtain dental care, the banning of amalgam fillings will take away a restorative dental material that is not only safe but affordable for those families. There are times when amalgam is the optimal filling material and that decision should be made by the dentist and his or her patient. Simply put, restricting the ability of professionally educated dentists to make appropriate decisions for their patient's health is not in the best interest of the patient.

Respectfully,



Santos Cortez, DDS

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