



## 2020 in Water

### New NDWA Organizational Member

- A warm welcome to RCAP, the [Rural Community Assistance Partnership](#)! Scan their website and be sure you know their regional partner in your area

### COVID-19 and Drinking Water

Understanding that sugary beverage consumption is a risk factor for conditions that are themselves the leading risk factors for severity of COVID-19 infection (hypertension/CVD, obesity and type 2 diabetes) highlights the value of our work to enable all people to drink water in place of sugary beverages. And the pandemic has put inequities that contribute to health disparities into stark relief – including inequities in access to safe, affordable and appealing drinking water.

COVID-19 water policy:

- In their 12/21/20 massive omnibus Congress appropriated \$638M for a new low-income household water rate assistance program at HHS – but did not pass a national shutoff moratorium. See the [text](#) (Sec. 533 on page 1097 in the HHS approps section).
  - The full [bill](#) is nearly 5,600 pages long. The House approved the \$2.3 trillion spending and relief package Monday night in two separate votes. The Senate passed the omnibus and COVID-19 relief package shortly before midnight with a 91-7 vote and the president signed the bill on 12/22/20.

Providing access to safe drinking water during COVID and beyond:

- The news post, [School Drinking Water Safety and Access During COVID-19](#), briefly reviews concerns around water access and provides links to building plumbing re-opening guidance, USDA's Q&A on water access in child nutrition programs.

COVID-specific water issues prompted formation of two new groups. If you'd like more information, please write me. In brief:

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- Water scientists around the country have been testing at the tap (primarily on college campuses) for pathogens (e.g., *legionella*) and toxins (e.g. lead) to understand what occurs when plumbing is put back in use after periods of little or no use, with the aim to develop guidance for recommissioning building plumbing. The group has had regular meetings to share preliminary findings.
  - We were happy to be able to provide recommendations for tap water safety language for Centers for Disease Control [Guidance for Reopening Buildings After Prolonged Shutdown or Reduced Operation](#)
- Activists took on the pandemic water problem of utility shutdowns of households in arrears on bill payment. The #NoShutoffs coalition ongoing ask is for a [national shutoff moratorium](#) - something enacted this year in a handful of states

### Policy Highlights

- As noted above, Congress appropriated \$638M for a new low-income household water rate assistance program at HHS
- December 13<sup>th</sup> was the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act with its groundbreaking language requiring access to safe drinking water in schools and childcare operating federal child nutrition programs
  - Read the law and subsequent regulatory language
    - [From Statute to Tap: National School Lunch Program](#)
    - [From Statute to Tap: Child and Adult Care Food Program](#)
- Municipalities are stepping up to support access to water, including water wins supported by NDWA ally American Heart Association - Voices for Healthy Kids
  - [Brookhaven, MS](#)
  - [Little Rock, AR](#)

### Advocacy Highlights

- 2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans
  - NDWA submitted comments urging strong language in favor of drinking water, and the addition of a symbol for water to the MyPlate graphic
    - 75 partners signed a [comment providing input to the 2020 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee](#)
    - 97 partners signed a [comment in response to 2020 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee Scientific Report](#)
  - NDWA ally *Salud America!* led a [healthy beverage comment campaign](#) with over 400 comments submitted
  - Nearly 60 top brass from NDWA ally [Mission: Readiness](#) submitted a comment to the DGAC on the importance of prioritizing water consumption in place of SSBs in the 2020-2025 DGAs
- Advocacy resource: Voices for Healthy Kids new [Water Access Toolkit](#) and [Water Fast Fasts](#)

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## 2020 Resource Highlights

- Research
  - NDWA maintains a [bibliography](#) of drinking water research
    - *Let us know about your new research – email [ceahecht@ucanr.edu](mailto:ceahecht@ucanr.edu)*
    - *Submit a short news post about your recent peer-reviewed publication for posting on the website*
  - The Annual Review of Nutrition invited a submission on drinking water; NDWA allies authored [Drinking Water in the United States: Implications of Water Safety, Access, and Consumption](#)
- Safety
  - We added [Childcare Drinking Water Safety](#) to NDWA's [Factsheet Library](#)
- Access
  - [AQWA, a photo-evidence tool for Assessing Quality of Water Access](#) is now online at NDWA and ready for use by researchers utilizing community data collection or by organizations wishing to document water access
    - Find the tool and all associated resources [here](#)
    - Tool was used by students in a Voices for Healthy Kids advocacy project! More [here](#)
- Education
  - [Keeping Teeth Healthy](#) includes plenty of advice to choose water
    - Factsheets in English and Spanish and across the lifespan from our allies at the American Academy of Pediatrics Campaign for Dental Health
  - [Increasing Drinking Water Availability in Schools](#), During COVID-19 and beyond
    - Infographic presenting options for water access outside of the cafeteria
  - [Centers for Disease Control Healthy Schools microlearning modules](#) (<5 minutes each) teach steps for improving school drinking water access
    - CDC also updated their webpage, [Water Access in Schools](#)
  - [Healthy Hydration: Ensuring access to safe water in schools](#) is a suite of checklists for schools, providing “to-do’s” for drinking water safety, access and promotion built to complement the CDC micromodules. Includes supporting resources.

*Please let us know what we're missing. Send new or updated resources to [ceahecht@ucanr.edu](mailto:ceahecht@ucanr.edu)*

## Website Analytics

National Drinking Water Alliance website - [DrinkingWaterAlliance.org](http://DrinkingWaterAlliance.org)

- Since inception (June, 2016): 32,919 users; 43,739 sessions; 87,776 page views
- Most visited pages since inception:
  - [Home page](#)
  - [Map](#) of media reports of tap water contamination
  - [New Interactive Map Tracks Water Safety](#) news post
  - [Facts](#) (Factsheet library)

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