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San Jose Mercury News (CA)

NEXT STEPS TOWARD FLUORIDATED WATER

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-- **Stephen Baxter**, Bay Area News Group

Leaders of the Health Trust outlined the next steps in their bid to fluoridate San Jose's water during a meeting at Santa Clara University early this month, and they previewed a campaign to raise roughly \$18 million for the project.

Because San Jose is one the largest metropolitan areas in the nation without fluoridated water, the Health Trust has connected with the Washington, D.C.-based Pew Charitable Trusts and First 5 Santa Clara County to plan the fundraising, communications and implementation of a fluoridation project in San Jose.

Health Trust CEO Frederick Ferrer said the trust opened a children's dental clinic in East San Jose in 2008, and many of its patients have tooth decay, toothaches and other problems that can interfere with schoolwork. The clinic has had some success, but he and his supporters indicated that fluoridating the water would improve the health of all residents.

California law requires large water retailers such San Jose Water Co. to fluoridate tap water if they are provided the money to do it. To that end, the Campbell-based Health Trust initiated a study in 2009 that will tackle the logistics and price tag of fluoridating San Jose Water Co. water.

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