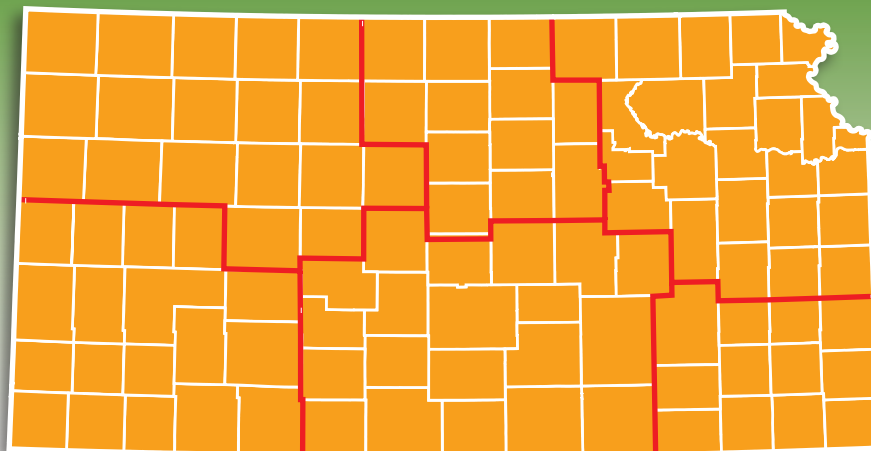


# ABOUT THIS REPORT

**O**ral health plays a significant role in overall health and well-being throughout our lives. Yet, “a silent epidemic” of oral disease is affecting our most vulnerable citizens – children, elderly people, people with disabilities, and adults who lack access to affordable dental care. Dental disease has been associated with such chronic conditions as diabetes, stroke, and heart disease. Additionally, reports find that dental disease is linked with increased risk for poor birth and pregnancy outcomes such as preterm, low birth weight, and gestational diabetes.

Strides have been made in Kansas since 2003 to improve access to oral health preventive measures such as dental screenings for children age 0 to 5, school-based dental sealant programs, and dental hygiene services in community-based settings. This report highlights the resources available and challenges facing each Kansas county in meeting the oral health needs of its residents. ■



For the purposes of this report, the counties have been divided into six regions of the state: Northeast, North Central, Northwest, Southwest, South Central, and Southeast.

While all of the counties in a region may not share the same access and health status qualities, it often is helpful to view the county data from this regional perspective.