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December 9, 2020

Testimony for Robert G. (Bob) Bethell Joint Committee on Home and Community Based Services and KanCare Oversight

Chairwoman Landwehr and Members of the Committee,

Oral Health Kansas is the state-wide advocacy organization dedicated to promoting the importance of lifelong dental health by shaping policy and educating the public, so Kansans know that all mouths matter. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before the Committee today regarding the Medicaid dental program. Several new reports about oral health in Kansas are going to be available early in 2021, and we would like to ask the Committee to **recommend an oral health briefing be held in both the House and Senate health committees during the 2021 Legislative Session so all members of the committees are able to hear the updates.**

Dental Reimbursement Rates

At the September KanCare Oversight Committee hearing, we shared an update on the \$3 million All Funds increase for Medicaid dental reimbursement rates included in the FY2021 Budget. At that time, the 2020 rate increase had been on hold for several months, but we are pleased to share it became effective in late November. The rate increase is retroactive to July 17 and claims for services provided since July 17 should automatically receive the difference in rates from the appropriate KanCare Managed Care Organization.

The rates that have been increased include comprehensive and periodic oral evaluation, adult and child cleanings, fluoride applications, sealants, fillings, and crowns. Oral Health Kansas worked alongside the Kansas Dental Association and the previous Medicaid Director to target dental codes that would increase access to dental care for underserved populations such as people with disabilities, including , dental code D9420 which is for Hospital Calls,. Although the finalized rate increase did not include all dental codes previously set, we are hopeful the rate increase will still have a positive impact on a growing dental provider network in Kansas

Dental Research Studies

Oral Health Kansas collaborated with the Kansas Health Institute (KHI) throughout 2020 to develop the recently released report titled, "Dental Insurance Coverage and Unmet Dental Needs in Kansas". The results showed that 64% of Kansans reported having dental insurance at the time of the survey, although there were significant gaps in dental insurance coverage based on race and ethnicity. The full report can be found on the websites of both Oral Health Kansas and the Kansas Health Institute.

Along with this new report with KHI, Oral Health Kansas is continuing to work on a cost benefit analysis with the American Dental Association's Health Policy Institute to estimate the cost and offsets of introducing comprehensive adult Medicaid dental benefits in Kansas. We are also finalizing a Kansas oral health report card that will grade Kansas on several different oral health components. Both of these should be finalized in early 2021.

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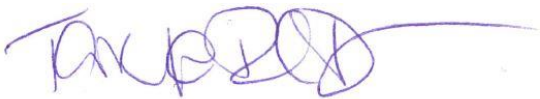
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Up-to-date, state specific data on oral health is often difficult to find, and Oral Health Kansas requests the opportunity to bring together partners on the studies for an oral health briefing to share all of the new data in both the House Health and Human Services Committee and the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee during the 2021 Legislative Session. This oral health briefing could include updates on the KHI study, American Dental Association study, oral health report card, and preliminary impact of the dental reimbursement rate increases.

Thank you for the opportunity to share important updates that impact the Medicaid dental program with the Committee today. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us. Oral Health Kansas is happy to assist the Committee, as you continue working to ensure all Kansans have access to the dental care they need.

Sincerely,



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