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February 19, 2021

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

Chairman Hilderbrand 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 provide testimony before the Committee today regarding the Medicaid dental program.

In December, your Committee made the recommendation to hold an oral health briefing in both the House and Senate health committees within the first 60 days of the 2021 Legislative Session so all members of the committees would be able to hear updates on oral health programs and new data in the state. We are pleased to inform the Committee that we did have the opportunity to hold an oral health briefing in Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee in late January. The Senate health committee heard many of the below updates, but we wanted to ensure the full KanCare Oversight Committee was aware of them as well.

Dental Reimbursement Rates

In 2019 and 2020 the Kansas Legislature passed \$3 million All Funds increases in KanCare dental rates, marking the first increase since 2001. It is a bit early to be able to report to you on the effect of the dental reimbursement rate increases on the Medicaid dental provider network for a couple of reasons.

1. The 2019 rate increase went into effect on August 1, 2019, and the 2020 rate increase went into effect on July 17, 2020. Both dates were announced retroactively, so the effect of the increase on providers will take a while to show.
2. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on dental providers. Dental offices were closed for several weeks last spring, and as they re-opened, the major focus was providing services with the new safety protocols in place.

We understand that since July 2020, eight pediatric dentists have become KanCare providers. Children are the only group in KanCare who have access to comprehensive dental services, so the increase in KanCare pediatric dentists is meaningful. As our state begins to recover and return to a life similar to pre-pandemic, we anticipate the rate increases will continue to have a positive impact on the dental provider network, and we will continue to promote the increase as a way to encourage more providers to enroll in KanCare.

2021 Kansas Oral Health Report Card

Oral Health Kansas is excited to share with you a new 2021 Kansas Oral Health Report Card! Overall, our state received a 'C' grade as compared to the nation's performance on 13 key oral health indicators. The grade shows Kansas is making progress on improving oral health, but we have a long way to go to ensure the population of our state is as healthy as possible. Below are a few of the grades on the report card, but we invite you to review all thirteen of the oral health indicators on the report card as they each have a story to tell about the oral health of Kansas.

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Report Card Facts:

- 20% of Kansas children enrolled in Medicaid ages 1-2 received a preventive dental care visit
 - GRADE: F
- 48% of Kansas third graders have caries experience (treated or untreated tooth decay)
 - GRADE: C
- 31% of Kansans age 65+ have lost six or more teeth due to tooth decay or gum disease
 - GRADE: C

The full report can be found on the Oral Health Kansas webpage or at this link:
<http://oralhealthkansas.org/pdf/2021%20Oral%20Health%20Report%20Card.pdf>

Dental Insurance Coverage Report

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 or at this link: <http://oralhealthkansas.org/DentalInsuranceReport.html>

Cost Benefit Study – Medicaid Dental Benefits

We have been coming to you for a number of years to request funding to establish an adult dental benefit in KanCare. Health and budget committees have studied the issue, and bills have been introduced. In fact, SB 227 was introduced in the Senate last week, which includes language to establish a comprehensive Medicaid dental benefit. Based on a similar bill that was introduced last year, we anticipate the fiscal note for this new bill will be less than \$5M SGF.

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, and we project the study may be complete in early to mid-March. It should show not only the projected cost of providing comprehensive dental benefits for adults, but also the savings that can be realized in KanCare by reducing emergency room visits and helping people manage their diabetes. We look forward to the opportunity to share the results with the Committee.

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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