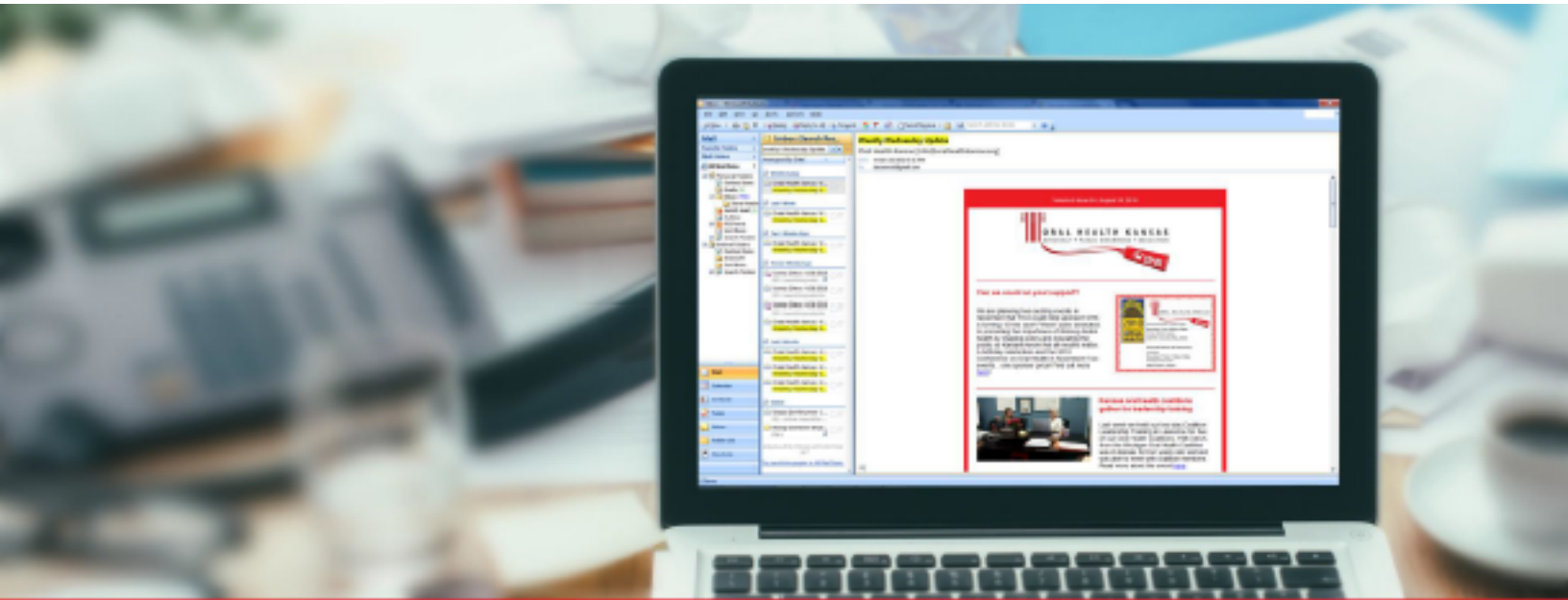




**ORAL HEALTH KANSAS**  
ADVOCACY • PUBLIC AWARENESS • EDUCATION



## WEEKLY WEDNESDAY UPDATE

The Weekly Wednesday Update is our newsletter which we email every Wednesday with oral health, health and policy updates from around the state and nationally.

To view past issues [click here](#).

Click here to sign up for our [Weekly Wednesday Update](#).

### February 16, 2022

Volume 13, Issue 7



### Updates from the Capitol

Last week we were able to report that both the Kansas House and Senate budget committees have recommended funding to extend KanCare dental benefits for adults. This week we will learn a little more about those budget recommendations, and we will keep you informed as the budget process continues over the

next few weeks. With your help we may be able to say that this is the year the legislature approved extending dental benefits to adults!

Oral Health Kansas has been busy working on a few other legislative issues this year. You can find a complete list of the testimony we have provided on our [website](#). Many issues we follow are related to the Medicaid program, but we are weighing in on other issues such as a bill that would eliminate sales tax on hygiene items like toothpaste.

This week Oral Health Kansas also began a series of visits with our Congressional delegation in Washington to discuss the importance Child Nutrition Reauthorization. This is a federal law that includes the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, and other child nutrition programs. We appreciate the opportunity to advocate for the importance of healthy meals at school during Children's Dental Health Month. Children consume a third to half of their daily calories at school, so making sure those meals include whole grains, fruits, and vegetables is good for their health and their ability to be ready to learn. We are grateful to Senator Jerry Moran's staff for visiting with us about the legislation.

We are tracking many issues at the state and national level this year, so let us know if there are any issues you have questions about!



## First Visit to the Dentist

At what age should you take your child to the dentist? Many moons ago, you were told to wait to take your child to the dentist. Now the science is clear - you should take your child to a first dental visit after that first tooth appears, but no later than the first birthday. Your child can develop cavities once his teeth come in.

Start talking with your child about oral health early! There are children's books that are fun to read about a visit to the dentist. [Potter the Otter](#) books are a fun way to learn about dental visits, eating healthy, and drinking water! If your child is still an infant, it's never too early to begin looking in his mouth and wiping gums to get him used to someone looking at his mouth. Wipe gums twice a day with a soft, clean cloth in the morning after the first feeding and right before bed to wipe away bacteria and sugars that can cause cavities. During this Children's Dental Health Month, learn more about baby teeth and dental visits by visiting our [website](#).



## Attend the National Oral Health Conference

The 23rd National Oral Health Conference (NOHC) will take place in Fort Worth, Texas beginning on April 9 - 10, 2022 with weekend workshops. The NOHC will be held April 11 - 13. Catch the early bird registration fee now available through February 21, 2022! NOHC is a great networking opportunity! Meet individuals from other states and hear what they're doing in their communities to focus on oral health. Click [here](#) to view the sessions and [here](#) to register.



## Combating Oral Health Disparities in Kansas

People are more likely to have poor oral health if they are members of racial and ethnic minorities. [A 2020 study](#) published by the National Institutes of Health said, "As a result, poor oral health serves as the national symbol of social inequity." of color face disproportionately lower health outcomes. Oral Health Kansas believes everyone should have equitable access to dental care and the ability to maintain good oral health throughout their lives, but sadly, race and ethnicity play a role in people's ability to access good oral health.

Research shows that dentists from underrepresented minority communities serve a larger portion of minority communities than white dentists, but in Kansas we do not track the race and ethnicity of dental professionals in order to have an understanding of the extent to which Black, Hispanic, Latino, and Native American people are underrepresented in our dental community. Gaining access to data that shows us where the inequities exist in our state is a first step toward ensuring everyone has access to dental care.

**This spring OHK will begin advocating to modify the Kansas dental licensure application to include race and ethnicity questions.** Our goal is for the state to be able to collect data to show whether the dental provider community is reflective of the Kansas community. If you would like to help with this advocacy, please contact us at [info@oralhealthkansas.org](mailto:info@oralhealthkansas.org) to learn more and get involved.

## Teachers and Students! Enter the Kansas Dental Association's Class Project Contest



Help your students create a class project depicting this year's National Children's Dental Health Month theme, "Sealants Make Sense" for a chance to win a \$100, \$250, or even \$500 gift card to buy supplies for your classroom!

Click [here](#) to find out how to enter the contest. Good luck!



## Upcoming Events

- Webinar: **COVID-19 and the Dental Hygienist, New Research Release, February 22 at 6:00pm CST.** The American Dental Hygienists Association and American Dental Association joined forces to conduct a longitudinal study of the impact of COVID-19 on dental hygienists. Register [here](#).
- Conference: **Missouri Oral Health Coalition Conference**, March 3 and 4, 2022. Find out more and register [here](#). For pre-conference sessions, you can view those [here](#).
- **Kansas Mission of Mercy**, March 25-26 in Hays, Kansas. If you want to volunteer, you must [register](#). For patient information, click [here](#).



We are excited to welcome Kent Haverkamp, MD, to the OHK Board of Directors. Dr. Haverkamp is the Medical Director at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Kansas. He brings over two decades of working with families in the

healthcare field. Closer to home, his wife is a Dental Assistant for an oral surgeon and his son is a recent dental school graduate who is practicing in Kansas! We are looking forward to learning from Dr. Haverkamp.





## Sugary Drink Display Sanitation

**Out of an abundance of caution, we are suspending use of the Sugary Drink Display until further notice.**

During this time, hand washing and social distancing is on everyone's mind. We want everyone to have the comfort of knowing we sanitize our sugary drink displays. They are wiped down and cleaned off after they have been returned.



Follow Us



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