



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](#).

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Legislative Activity Heats Up As Snowstorm Cools It Down

It's been an interesting week at the Capitol, especially since activity was all but halted in the wake of the big winter storm. Senate and House committees planned to take action on bills ranging from COVID treatments and Medicaid managed care contracts to dental therapy, but the snow storm that blanketed northeast Kansas closed

the Legislature on Wednesday, and the Senate decided to postpone nearly all meetings for the remainder of the week.

It is still a big week for dental issues. On Thursday, February 3, stakeholders will as the Senate Ways and Means Human Services Subcommittee to extend KanCare dental coverage to adults. Oral Health Kansas will provide testimony, along with several partners, providers, and consumers. A growing list of stakeholders is signing on to support KanCare adult dental coverage. The list of organizations supporting adult dental coverage and link to add yours to it are on our [adult dental webpage](#).

Thanks to all of our supporters who have reached out to their Senators to ask for adult dental coverage to be added to KanCare! We will provide similar testimony before the House Social Services Budget Committee next week, so be on the lookout for additional opportunities to contact your Representatives.

Thursday also brings an opportunity for Oral Health Kansas to update the House Social Services Budget Committee on the Medicaid dental rates in Kansas. [A recent report from the American Dental Association's Health Policy Institute](#) showed that Kansas' Medicaid rates as compared to private insurance rates are better than our neighboring states. Addressing Medicaid rates is a journey, not a destination, and we will use the committee discussion as a way to show how much progress has been made since the 2019 and 2020 rate increases even as there is a lot farther to go.



Kansas Receives a 'C' Grade for the Second Year

Last week we released the [2022 Kansas Oral health Report Card](#). This is the second release of the Report Card with a low score of 'C'. It shows that our state is doing many things right, but that we have a long way to go to ensure that all Kansans are able to maintain their oral health. For the second year in a row, Kansas received a grade of C on a series of indicators.

New Indicators

In 2021, there were 13 indicators and this year there are 15. One was created by dividing third graders with tooth decay and third graders who received no dental care. Tooth decay and no dental care were a single indicator last year, however this year the category has been divided into two separate indicators. Oral Health Kansas also added youth soda consumption as an additional indicator. Soda consumption among youth is a concern because carbonated drinks have sugar and acid which can lead to tooth decay. The data is based on self-reported information from high school students.

2022 Grade Drops

Kansas received a C grade last year as well as this year, but the actual points went down from 2.07 to 1.93. (The grading scale is from 0-4; 4 being an "A"). This means that when it comes to dental care in Kansas, there is much room for improvement.

One of the reasons Kansas had a lower grade point this year than last year is because it received a D grade in the following indicators:

- Percentage of children ages 3-5 received preventive dental care visit
- Percentage of third graders that have dental sealants on permanent molars
- Percentage of Kansans that drink optimally fluoridated water (natural or adjusted)

Strategies to Improve

Oral Health Kansas has numerous strategies on our [website](#) that could help people maintain good oral health, including educational programs and consumer information. In 2022 Oral Health Kansas is leading an advocacy effort to extend dental benefits in KanCare to adults. Organizations can share their support by signing a [form](#). Individuals can share their stories about lack of access to dental care in Medicaid by contacting us at info@oralhealthkansas.org. KanCare needs to include a comprehensive dental benefit for adults so that more than two-thirds of adults can afford to see a dentist on a regular basis.

Stakeholders in Kansas must work together to develop ways to ensure that all children in the state receive timely and routine preventive treatment, and dental care. Additional areas that require collaboration are improving access to affordable dental care for pregnant women and older adults in Kansas.

Read the fifteen oral health indicators on the [report card](#), as they each have a story to tell about the oral health of Kansas. Please join us in the fight to improve services, supports, and policies to increase access to optimal oral health for all Kansans.



UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI-KANSAS CITY

UMKC Students Learn About Oral Health and Disabilities

Last month dental students at the UMKC School of Dentistry had the chance to learn about providing dental care for people with disabilities. The Kansas Dental Association hosted a lunch and learn for dental students and included Oral Health Kansas Dental Program Director Kathy Hunt and board member Tami Allen in the presentation. The students learned about the oral health needs of people with disabilities and common barriers to oral health care. They also received resources developed by our Dental Homes for Kids project team that were designed to support a successful dental appointment for both dental providers and people with disabilities. Consumer documents include a [dental care passport](#) and a [guide for finding the](#)

[right dental office](#). They also shared a [new patient check list](#) intended for use by dental offices. You can find all of these documents along with more information on our [consumer resource webpage](#). Additional resources for people with disabilities are available [here](#).



February is National Children's Dental Health Month

This year's National Children's Dental Health Month theme is "Sealants Make Sense." Sealants are a thin, protective coating that adheres to the chewing surface of your back teeth. The American Dental Association (ADA) says they're no substitute for brushing and flossing, but they can keep cavities from forming and may even stop early stages of decay from becoming a full-blown cavity. Ask your child's dentist about dental sealants at their next visit.

The Kansas Bureau of Oral Health manages the Kansas School Sealant Program to bring preventive oral health services to children who may have limited access to dental care. [Learn more on their website](#).

The ADA has free posters for Children's Dental Health Month. Click [here](#) to order posters!

To learn more about sealants, take the [MouthHealthy Quiz on Sealants](#).



Kansas Mission of Mercy Registration Re-Opens

The Kansas Mission of Mercy has been rescheduled for March 25-26 in Hays, Kansas. If you had registered as a volunteer for the event in February, you will need to register again. To find out more information for volunteers, go to the [Kansas Dental Charitable Foundation's website](#).



State Oral Health Plan Released

This week the Kansas Bureau of Oral Health released the latest State Oral Health Plan. The new plan was authored by Dr. Julia Heinrichs

and Kiran Kanakadandila in coordination with the Bureau of Oral Health staff.

The plan has four goal areas:

Goal 1: Promote Medical-Dental Integration

Goal 2: Educate Kansans about Dental Care Costs and Low-cost Dental Resources

Goal 3: Increase Access to Care in Rural and Underserved Communities

Goal 4: Promote Preventative Oral Health Awareness and Education

In releasing the new plan, Kansas Dental Director Dr. Dayna Brinckman noted, "Despite many recent improvements in oral health both in the United States and Kansas, profound oral health disparities still exist for many groups related to their socioeconomic status, education level, race, ethnicity, geographic location, health care status and age."

Read the full oral health plan [here](#).



Upcoming Events

- Webinar: COVID Support through Care Coordination ECHO Series. This will be a webinar series beginning February 8. Click [here](#) to view the dates.
- Webinar: Four Projects Aiming to Improve Population Oral Health, hosted by CareQuest Institute, in collaboration with the American Public Health Association Oral Health Section, February 10 at 12:00pm

CST. Register [here](#)!

- Webinar: Improving Digital Health Literacy among Hispanic/Latino Populations, February 16, 12:00pm - 1:15pm CST. *The session will be in Spanish with live language interpretation to English.* Registration is available [here](#).
- Webinar: Supporting Smiles: Promoting Childhood Dental Benefits Covered Under Medicaid and CHIP, 1:00pm - 2:30pm CST. 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](#).



Irene Caudillo, President/CEO at El Centro, Inc. received the Community Hero award from the NAACP in Johnson County during their Martin Luther King, Jr. event. Irene spoke at our 2020 Conference on Oral Health and gave us insight on systemic racism and its effect on health



equity. She is well engaged her in community, working for the Latino community to lead healthier lives. Irene is a visionary leader and receiving this award is much deserved! Congratulations Irene!



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.

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