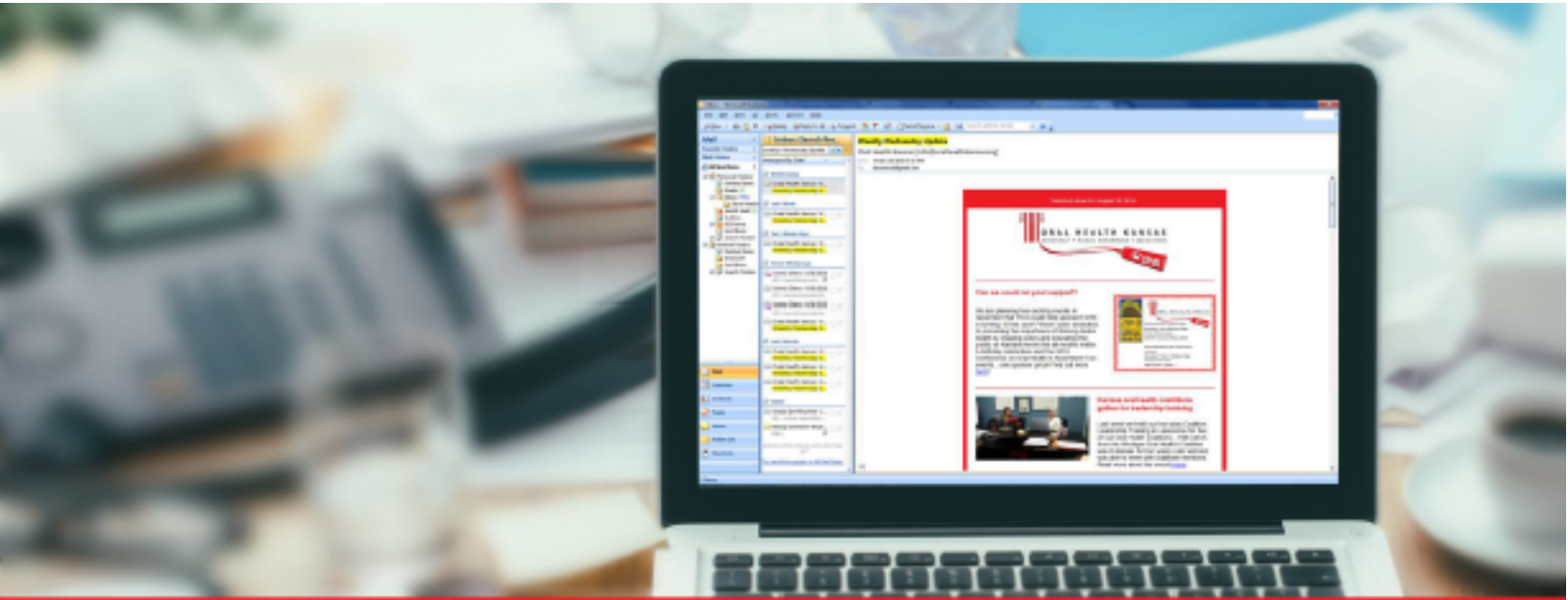




**ORAL HEALTH KANSAS**  
ADVOCACY • PUBLIC AWARENESS • EDUCATION



## 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 9, 2022

Volume 13, Issue 6



## Adult Dental Benefits Within Sight

Today Kansas legislators inched closer to extending Medicaid dental benefits to adults. Both the Senate Ways and Means Committee and House Social Services Budget Committee adopted a recommendation that funding be included in the next state budget “to increase the availability of adult dental services provided through the State Medicaid program.” This is a formal way of saying they are recommending Medicaid dental coverage be available to adults. Legislators made it

clear they want to see basic restorative dental services like fillings included in the benefits in order to be sure adults can keep their teeth and maintain their oral health.

With recommendations for adult dental funding from both the House and Senate budget committees, Kansas is getting much closer to a long-term goal of ensuring that low-income adults have dental benefits through Medicaid. Nearly two dozen organizations have added their names to the list of those supporting extending dental coverage to adults. ([See the list on our adult dental webpage.](#)) This week eight individuals and organizations gave verbal testimony in the House Social Services Budget Committee asking for the coverage, and many more provided written testimony. The calls, emails, social media posts, and testimonies are showing policymakers that Kansans want to ensure that all people can be healthy by accessing dental care, and it is clear they are listening. Thank you to everyone who has reached out to lawmakers and lent your voices to the calls to action.

Coverage for adults is not yet finalized, and Oral Health Kansas will keep you posted on the progress, next steps, and opportunities to advocate as the legislative session progresses.



## OHK Staff Member Represents Kansas on National Campaign

OHK staff member Kathy Hunt has been named the Kansas representative for the [100 Million Mouths Project](#). This national initiative will create 50 oral health champions over the next decade, one in each state, to work with health profession schools on integrating oral health into their curricula and bridging gaps in oral health access. If you're a health-related academic and would like to know more about how we can support your integration efforts, please contact Kathy at [khunt@oralhealthkansas.org](mailto:khunt@oralhealthkansas.org).



## Families Come Together to Talk About the Importance of Water in Schools

On January 27, the [Thirsty for Health Project](#) held a virtual focus group for Topeka USD 501 families. The focus group was facilitated by former board member and Community Connections Librarian at the Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library, Lissa Staley.

### The discussion centered on:

- water bottle filling stations and why parents and students like them
- the ease of use and cleanliness of water bottle filling stations
- drinking water to stay alert for school and activities
- cost effective reusable water bottles versus plastic bottles
- what can we do as a community to make sure our schools have water bottle filling stations

Families received a gift card in appreciation for their time! The project will be hosting another focus group and we will keep you updated with details. If you are not able to attend the focus groups but would like to share your experiences with water bottle filling stations in your child's schools, email us the project at [thirstyforhealthkansas@gmail.com](mailto:thirstyforhealthkansas@gmail.com)



## Toothbrushing Tips for Your Child

Do you know how much toothpaste to use on your toothbrush? If your response is “put enough toothpaste to cover your toothbrush,” your answer is not correct!

Surprised? When your child's first tooth emerges, use a rice-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste. Use a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste after their third birthday. Yes, that also includes you, the parent!

It's National Children's Dental Health Month! Share with us a picture of you and your child brushing your teeth with the right amount of toothpaste on your toothbrush! You can email the pictures at [info@oralhealthkansas.org](mailto:info@oralhealthkansas.org) or share on our [Facebook page](#).

If you want to do some fun activities with your child on oral health, visit our [Super Smiles for Your Child page](#) for some interactive activities you can do together!



## Celebrating Black History Month

February, the Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health is celebrating the achievements of Black communities and honoring the significant role and impact they have made on all facets of life and society throughout U.S. history during [Black History Month](#). This year's theme, Black Health and Wellness, acknowledges the legacy of Black scholars, medical practitioners, and health care workers whose activities and initiatives have positively impacted the health and wellness of racial and ethnic minority communities.

In dentistry, there are three prominent African American professionals in the earlier years.

- Robert Tanner Freeman was the first professional Black dentist in America. The child of slaves, Dr. Freeman emerged from poverty to become the first professionally trained black dentist. He entered Harvard Medical School in 1867, 4 years after the end of the Civil War.
- Dr. George F. Grant was also the son of former slaves. He entered and graduated from Harvard University's dental school in 1870, and went on to become not only the first African American faculty member of Harvard, working in their department of mechanical dentistry, but he made several contributions to cleft palate procedures.
- Dr. Ida Gray Nelson Rollins became the first African American female dentist in 1890. A former seamstress, who later began working under Dr. Jonathan Taft for three years, studying for entrance exams.

Read more stories about these amazing dental professionals [here!](#)



## Upcoming Events

- Webinar tomorrow, January 10, **Improving Racial Equity in Kansas: A Three-Part Series Examining the Commission on Racial Equity and Justice's Final Recommendations**, 12:00pm CST. Register [here](#).
- 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**, February 15, 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](#).
- Kansas Mission of Mercy, March 25-26 in Hays, Kansas. If you want to volunteer, you must [register](#). For patient information, click [here](#).





Shannon Uehling recently joined the OHK Board of Directors. She is a [Dental Champions Class 9 member](#) and works in marketing and communication for Sunflower Health Plan. She brings her

managed care organization experience and knowledge, perspective as a mother and relative as well as her communications skills. We are grateful for Shannon's commitment to oral health!



## 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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