



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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[Weekly Wednesday Update.](#)

Autism Awareness Month

Individuals with autism may face unique challenges when it comes to oral health care. Sensory sensitivities, communication difficulties, behavioral issues, and resistance to change can make oral hygiene routines and dental visits challenging. Sensory sensitivities may lead to aversions to toothbrushing, toothpaste



flavors, or the feeling of dental instruments in the mouth, making it difficult to maintain good oral hygiene.

We have some resources to help people on the autism spectrum with toothbrushing techniques, adaptations, and communication:

- [Super Smiles for Your Child](#) - if you have a child with a disability, there are several videos that may help.
- [My Dental Passport](#) - is designed to improve the dental office visit for people with disabilities by letting individuals and their families/caregivers voice their specific needs, before the dental visit.
- [Resources for Adaptive Aids](#) - different types of toothbrush ideas.
- [Changing it Up](#) - ways to modify your toothbrushing.
- Reluctant toothbrusher in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

If you have questions, email us at info@oralhealthkansas.org.



Black Maternal Health Week

April 11 begins Black Maternal Health Week. It is important to stop and take stock of the fact that Black women are three times more likely to die from a pregnancy-related cause than White women (<https://www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/maternalinfanthealth/severematernalmorbidity.html>). Historical exposure to racial trauma and discrimination, systemic barriers such as systemic racism and implicit bias in the healthcare system, as well as socioeconomic factors contribute to the disproportionately high levels of morbidity and mortality among pregnant Black people (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9914526/#B1-healthcare-11-00438>).

60% to 75% of pregnant people develop gingivitis, a gum disease typically caused by a bacterial infection that can result in red and inflamed gums. Catching and treating gingivitis early is key to preventing more severe periodontal disease, which can result in bone and tooth loss. Gingivitis is only one of several common dental health problems that can arise during pregnancy, and in some cases, dental issues can contribute to premature births, pre-eclampsia, and low birth weight babies.

The systemic reasons Black women face much higher odds when they are pregnant are many, but worry about getting dental care should not be one of them. Going to the dentist while

pregnant is safe and recommended by the American Dental Association, American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, American Academy of Pediatrics, and more. Learn more about pregnancy and oral health with our [Tip and Trick](#), and encourage the pregnant people in your life to get dental care



Volunteer Month: Shawnee County Oral Health Coalition

The Shawnee County Oral Health Coalition was established in 2015. It began as a group of volunteers from health departments, dentists, dental clinics, Parents as Teachers, and USD 501 staff. Their focus has been children ages birth through three years of age and how to help families keep oral health at the top of their minds.

The coalition adapted the Brush, Book, Bed (BBB) program from one designed by the American Academy of Pediatrics that was used in pediatricians' offices. The coalition's vision was to take the program into community-based settings by partnering with existing early childhood home visitation programs. The coalition expanded BBB in 2017 to TARC, a community developmental disabilities organization. Through this project expansion, families that include a parent and a child with a developmental disability can learn how to create a bedtime routine of brushing teeth and reading books. BBB has expanded even further to Head Start Programs, Parents as Teachers and health departments.

The members of the coalition are volunteers who give their time in the Topeka community to educate families about oral health and the importance of staying healthy. Topekans frequently see coalition members at health fairs and community events. Look for them this weekend at Read and Roll in downtown Topeka. We appreciate the work they do! If you're interested in learning more, email us at info@oralhealthkansas.org.

Scholarship Fund

In January of this year, we lost an oral health advocate and Dental Champions member, Heather Samuel. She was a longtime teacher, colleague, and friend to many at Johnson County Community College (JCCC). She enjoyed a 30-year career in the dental hygiene



program, retiring in May 2022. In that time, she contributed to well over six hundred dental hygiene students' lives investing in their education through her mentorship and teaching. This passion also aided in one of her greatest achievements at JCCC, the inception and development of the Oral Health on Wheels mobile dental unit. The [Johnson County Community College Foundation](#) has established a scholarship fund in memory of Heather Samuel to support JCCC Dental Hygiene students. You can learn more here:

<https://ow.ly/3WP050QE4Uw>



Upcoming Events

- Course: An Introduction to Value-Based Care in Oral Health: Moving from Volume to Value, 1 CE. Click [here](#) for the course information.
- Self paced courses: [Providing Oral Health Care to Autistic Individuals](#) and [Caring for Individuals with Disabilities: Practical Considerations for Dental Providers](#).
- Alliance for a Healthy Kansas monthly meetings, [Events | Alliance for a Healthy Kansas 2022 \(expandkancare.com\)](#)
- **Save the date!** 2024 Conference on Oral Health will be Friday, November 8 at the Kansas State Olathe Campus, 22201 W Innovation Dr., Olathe, KS.

If you would like to add your event to this list, email info@oralhealthkansas.org.



Congratulations to Brandon Skidmore who has been selected as the new President and CEO of Sunflower Foundation! Brandon, who will assume his new role on April 8, is succeeding longtime President and CEO Billie Hall, who is retiring this month. Brandon has been with

Sunflower Foundation since 2016, most recently serving as Vice President of Health Systems.

We're thrilled to hear about Brandon's new role and look forward to continuing to work with him. Click [here](#) to see the full announcement. Picture courtesy of Sunflower Foundation.



Sugary Drink Display

We have Adult and Children's Sugary Drink Display's available for reservations. These displays are eye catching at exhibits, schools, library, dental offices, clinics and just about anywhere you see them!

We only have a limited amount so please sign up soon if you're interested in reserving one. Click [here](#) to learn more about sugary drink display reservations!

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