

## 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.\*\*](#)

## 2024 Report Card Results

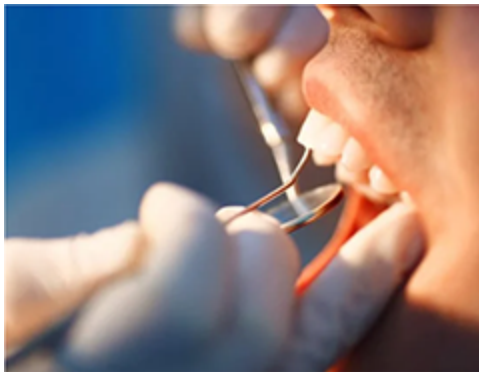
Earlier this week, we released the 2024 Kansas Oral Health Report Card. For the fourth year in a row, Kansas received a grade of C on a series of indicators. Although we are working towards making oral health better in our state, the results show that we still have work to do to make improvements. From the 2023 to the 2024 report card, there were jumps of nearly 10% of children enrolled in Medicaid ages 1-2, ages 3-5 and ages 1-20 who received a preventive



dental care visit. That's great but it indicates that less than 50% are receiving preventive dental care. Since the release of the report card four years ago, there has not been a significant change in outcomes for adults. The last dental coverage study was done in 2017 and there may be an increase of coverage for adults since Medicaid began covering dental care for adults in 2022.

You can read the overview of the report card [here](#) and click [here](#) to see the results of the report card.

If you would like to support the work of Oral Health Kansas, click [here](#) to donate.



## Preventive Dental Care Takes a Step Backward

Last night the legislative budget conference committee agreed to remove funding for preventive dental care for adults enrolled in Medicaid for now and review the issue when they return for their wrap-up session at the end of April. The budget conference committee's role is to work out the differences between the House and Senate versions of the state budget and agree on a final funding package. The Senate had included the \$4.8 million needed to cover exams, x-rays, and cleanings for adults in their budget, but the House did not.

Oral Health Kansas has been leading a coalition of two dozen organizations over the past few months to advocate for Medicaid to cover basic preventive dental care for adults. While legislators in both the House and Senate budget committees overwhelmingly agree the funding is a good idea, the issue has run into a significant road block as larger budget issues around Medicaid are being discussed.

All hope is not lost. In the next couple of weeks, Oral Health Kansas will share ways our partners can help send the message to legislators that we need to [cover preventive dental care for adults](#) now. Keep watching for legislative alerts to learn how you can help.



## Columbia University Students Learn about Oral Health Kansas

In 2022, staff member MaryAnne Lynch Small, joined Oral Health Kansas as she completed her Masters of General Public Health at Columbia University in New York City. Last week, MaryAnne had the pleasure of being invited back to the Mailman School of Public Health to speak with current students about her career path.

MaryAnne spoke on her time as an intern at Oral Health Kansas as she completed her 'Applied Practical Experience,' a hands-on component of an MPH in which students get 'real-life' experience working in the field. Through this experience, MaryAnne assisted in the extension of the 'Pathways to Oral Health' project to adults and has since gone on to help lead both Pathways to Oral Health and the Sedation Dental Care Task Force as a staff member. Holding a concurrent Associate Research Scientist position at the Columbia University College of Dental Medicine, MaryAnne's diverse career allows her to bring a unique perspective on the relationship between cutting edge research and the reality of implementing meaningful change.

Students in Columbia's General Public Health track come from a range of professional and geographic backgrounds, with several individuals either holding or in the process of attaining dental degrees. They were highly engaged in the work of Oral Health Kansas and their enthusiasm and passion to strive for equity in the field of dentistry and beyond is inspiring. We look forward to Columbia's General Public Health class of 2024 joining the profession and (fingers crossed) extending their expertise to Oral Health Kansas.



## Medical Dental Integration in Kansas

OHK continues to partner with healthcare C schools across the state to share information about the importance of integrating oral health into their curriculum. This ensures that new providers feel confident in discussing the significance of good oral health with their patients. Last week, Kathy Hunt, our Dental Program Director, teamed up with Kim Fowler, a dental hygienist and oral health educator from the Community Health Center of Southeast Kansas, to present information and real-world examples of the impact of oral health on overall health to Family Nurse Practitioner students at Pittsburg State University.

Visit our [website](#) for more information.



## National Minority Health Month

National Minority Health Month is a time to reflect on the health disparities that persist among racial and ethnic minority and American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) populations. Individuals in American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) communities experience a disproportionate burden of oral disease compared to non-AI/AN communities. The prevalence of early childhood caries (tooth decay) is three times higher for AI/AN children than

it is for white children. AI/AN adults are twice as likely as the overall US population to have untreated decay, and 83% of AI/AN adults report tooth loss compared to 66% of the overall US population. [Read more in this white paper](#) developed by CareQuest Institute for Oral Health and other partners.



## 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 \(expandkancare.com\)](#)
- **Webinar:** Join a Conversation with Rep. Alma S. Adams about Black Maternal Health and Oral Health, April 8 from 10:30 a.m.â€” 11 CST. Register [here](#).
- **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](mailto:info@oralhealthkansas.org).



Congratulations Billie Hall, Sunflower Foundation President and CEO for the past 23 years, has been selected to receive the prestigious Terrance Keenan Leadership Award in Philanthropy from



Grantmakers In Health! The award recognizes a grantmaker whose work is distinguished by leadership, innovation, achievement, creativity and boldness. Hall has guided the statewide health philanthropy in its mission to serve as a catalyst for improving the health of all Kansans.

Congratulations Billie! Picture is 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!

### Follow Us



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