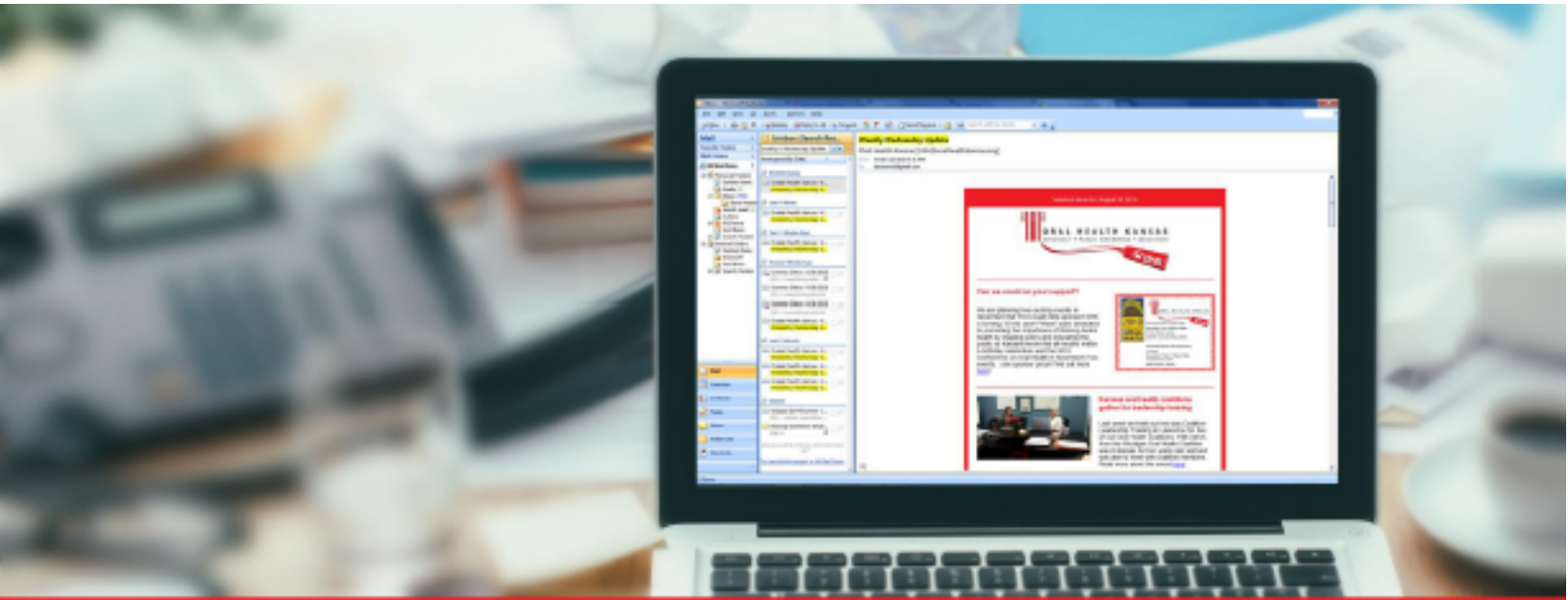




**ORAL HEALTH KANSAS**  
ADVOCACY • PUBLIC AWARENESS • EDUCATION



## 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](#).

### April 6, 2022

Volume 13, Issue 14

## Big Victories in Budget Bill

The Legislature reached First Adjournment late Friday night/early Saturday morning. While many major issues remain unresolved, including the issue of reducing sales tax on food, several issues were resolved with the passage of a budget bill. The budget passed by both the House and Senate includes funding to extend Medicaid dental benefits to adults in the next fiscal year! It also includes funding to expand the Kansas Department of Health and



Environment's school-based oral health programs and funding to extend Medicaid coverage for 12 months postpartum. Women currently are covered for only 60 days after giving birth, so this extended coverage will help them continue meeting their healthcare needs for a year. Each of these funding additions will ensure more Kansans are able to be healthier. The last step in the budget process is for Governor Kelly to approve the budget bill, and that is likely to happen in the next several days.

The Legislature will return on April 25 for a wrap-up session to address the unfinished business for 2022.

We will continue following this story and keep you updated as we learn more. The advocacy the Kansas oral health community mustered this year is paying off with a historic win for improved oral health for Kansans living in poverty. Thank you for everything you've done, and stay tuned to learn about the next steps as we all work together to implement the adult dental benefits.



## Oral Health Kansas on the Road

This past week saw Oral Health Kansas staff hitting the road for the first time in two years to participate in meetings across the state.

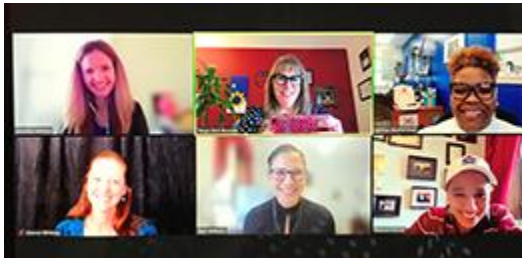
- Executive Director Tanya Dorf Brunner and Salina Director of Utilities Martha Tasker presented an overview of community water fluoridation at the **Kansas Rural Water Association** Conference in Wichita. Two dozen water operators joined the session to learn about how community water fluoridation works, some of the new technology in use in water treatment plants, and resources available to support water operators. Hundreds of water operators and utility staff attended

the meeting, which had not been held since 2019.

- Tanya Dorf Brunner spoke at the **Governor's Conference on Public Health** in Manhattan. She gave a presentation about public health policy and legislative engagement, and over 180 people participated in the hybrid session. The public health community in Kansas was out in

full force as they continue to work together to ensure people are safe and healthy.

- Dental Program Director Kathy Hunt hosted an exhibit at the **Kansas Dental Hygienists' Association** (KDHA) Spring Meeting in Lawrence. Dozens of hygienists from across the state gathered to network and attend a variety of sessions. They also had the chance to see some of Oral Health Kansas' new resources. Congratulations to KDHA President and Oral Health Kansas Board member Whitney Zamora on a great event.
- Kathy Hunt gave a series of presentations about oral health and careers in the dental field to students in the **JAG-K program at Topeka West High School** this week. JAG-K is the Kansas chapter of Jobs for America's Graduates and is a way for high school students to explore a variety of career paths.



## Hill Visits

Oral Health Kansas has been meeting with members of our Congressional delegation over the past week. We had the chance to join some national colleagues to talk with Senator Moran's staff about a bill to cover dental care for veterans. Veterans in Kansas are 107% more likely than non-veterans to be missing six or more teeth. They are 86% more likely to develop a chronic condition such as heart disease that is influenced by dental disease, and Kansas veterans are 17% more likely to have not seen a dentist in five years. The coverage gap is staggering, and we appreciated the opportunity to visit with Senator Moran's staff about ways to close the gap and ensure Kansas veterans are healthy.

This week we joined our colleagues from the Kansas Head Start Association on a virtual Hill visit with Rep. Sharice Davids. We discussed the need for Congress to pass Child Nutrition Reauthorization, which is the program that pays for school lunches and breakfasts. The program is responsible for ensuring Kansas schoolchildren have a healthy meal at least once a day and are full and ready to learn. This program is due for reauthorization this year, and we appreciated the opportunity to visit with Rep. Davids about strengthening the nutrition standards and passing reauthorization soon.



## Water in Schools: A Student's Perspective

Thirsty for Health intern, Jenna Gorton, submitted a blog to Voices for Healthy Kids on why water is important to her. Jenna was in debate throughout her high school years and realized drinking water to keep her hydrated and alert was important. Some of the schools she debated at did not have water bottle filling stations and she did not always have money to get a bottle of water. She remembers these days were a struggle for her to maintain alert during the debate competitions. You can read her blog [here](#).



## Upcoming Events

- Thirsty for Health **Virtual Focus Groups** for the Topeka Public School area- April 12, 5 - 6pm or 6 - 7pm. Click [here](#) and learn how to sign up!
- **Save the Date!** 16th Kansas Disability Caucus on August 10th-12th. Click [here](#) for details.



Thanks to Oral Health Kansas Board Member and Shawnee County Oral Health Coalition Co-Chair Veronica Byrd for hosting a table at last weekend's "Roll and

Read" event in downtown Topeka. The event offered families the chance to learn about health and literacy issues. Oral Health Kansas' Executive Director Tanya Dorf



Brunner joined in the fun as they talked with over 30 families about sugary drinks and good oral health habits.



## 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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