



ORAL HEALTH KANSAS

ADVOCACY • PUBLIC AWARENESS • EDUCATION

Board of Directors

Sonja Armbruster
Wichita State University

Melanie Simmer-Beck, PhD, RDH
UMKC School of Dentistry

Chip Blaser
Douglas Co. Community Found.

Veronica Byrd
Parents as Teachers Pine Ridge

Barb Conant
Kansas Advocates for Better Care

Robyne Goates
Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Kansas

Krista Hahn, RDH, MBA, ECP III
Marian Dental Clinic

Debra Meisenheimer, BS, MS, CPC

Kevin Robertson, MPA, CAE
Kansas Dental Association

Nick Rogers, DDS
Rogers Family Dentistry

Jonalan Smith, PharmD
Lockton Companies

Preddis Sullivan, DDS
Delta Dental of Kansas

James B. Trotter, DDS, PA

Whitney Zamora, RDH
Kansas Dental Hygienists' Assoc.

Senate Public Health & Welfare Oral Health in Kansas Briefing January 28, 2021

Chairman Hilderbrand and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to share important updates regarding oral health in Kansas with the committee today. My name is Christi Wells and I am the Policy Director at Oral Health Kansas. Oral Health Kansas (OHK) is the state's consumer oral health advocacy organization, and our mission is to improve oral health for all Kansans through advocacy, public awareness, and education. We currently have over 1600 supporters throughout the state who share our vision to ensure Kansans have access to dental providers and a way to pay for dental services.

DENTAL PUBLIC HEALTH

Although we do work alongside state stakeholders such as the Kansas Dental Association to improve traditional dental clinics, much of our time is focused on dental public health. Dental public health focuses on the community as a whole versus one-on-one dental treatment plans delivered in a dental office setting.

Dental public health includes, but is not limited to:

- Oral Health Surveillance
 - Access to local and up-to-date data on the community's oral health status to help show gaps and improvements in the state's oral health programs
- Policy Development
 - Use of data and scientific knowledge to pass and implement evidence-based policy, making an often immediate and greater impact on oral health programs across the state
- Community-Based Disease Prevention and Health Promotion
 - Community screening programs to identify untreated caries in children and educational programs to increase knowledge among the general public on importance of oral health
- Maintenance of the dental safety net
 - Safety net clinics and Federally Qualified Health Centers that provide care to patients without insurance or on limited budgets
 - More information on these clinics can be found at Community Care Network of Kansas

It is only when private practice dentistry and dental public health work together that we are able to create a cohesive and complementary dental network to reach optimal oral health for all Kansans.

712 S. Kansas Ave, Suite 414 AB
Topeka, KS 66603

785-235-6039 (phone)
785-233-5564 (fax)
info@oralhealthkansas.org

www.oralhealthkansas.org

KANSAS ORAL HEALTH REPORT CARD

Data on oral health, especially local and up-to-date, is often difficult to find. We are fortunate that our counterpart in Oklahoma did the research last year to make data about the oral health status in Kansas attainable. We are excited to share with you today a new 2021 Kansas Oral Health Report Card!

Overall, our state received a 'C' grade on our oral health report card, showing our state has both successes and challenges in our current oral health programs. Each of the thirteen oral health indicators are given a grade based off our state's percentage in comparison to the nation's percentage. The disadvantage of this grading scale is its ability to hide areas for improvement in positive grades. For example, Kansas received an 'A' for meeting 40% of needs in Dental Health Provider Shortage Areas, while the national average is closer to 30%. While we received an 'A', there are still 60% of unmet needs in these provider shortage areas in our state, a clear sign for the need for improvement. I invite you to review all thirteen of the oral health indicators on the report card as they each have a story to tell about the oral health of Kansas.

Oral Health Kansas uses data, such as the report card and other studies you will hear about today, to guide our priorities to make the greatest impact on improving the oral health of Kansas. We currently have projects focused on improving access to dental care for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, pregnant women, and young children, as well as many educational programs to teach families on the importance of oral health in their overall health. We also continue to work closely with the Legislature and Kansas Dental Association to reduce the number of Dental Health Provider Shortage Areas and increase the number of dental providers enrolling in the Medicaid program. We thank the committee for your support of a Medicaid dental rate increase in 2019 and 2020. This is an important tool to help increase the number of Medicaid dental providers in the state.

Thank you for the opportunity share important updates about the oral health of Kansas. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me using the below contact information. Oral Health Kansas is happy to assist the Committee, as you continue working to improve the oral health of Kansas.

Sincerely,



Christi Wells
Policy Director
cwells@ohks.org