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Bob Bethell Joint Committee on HCBS and KanCare Oversight Committee February 14, 2025

Chair Gossage,

Thank you for the opportunity to share this testimony with the Committee. My name is Tanya Dorf Brunner, and I am the Executive Director of Oral Health Kansas, Inc. We are the statewide advocacy organization dedicated to promoting the importance of lifelong oral health by shaping policy and educating the public.

Special Committee on Sedation Dentistry

Last October the Legislature convened a one-day interim study of the issues surrounding challenges Kansans face in trying to access sedation dental care. The Committee explored a plethora of issues from the perspectives of dental providers, mobile anesthesia providers, and consumers. They made a comprehensive set of recommendations in their [report to the 2025 Legislature](#). There is progress on some of these issues already this year, and I want to update you on them.

Three recommendations related to Medicaid rates:

- An overall rate increase for dental providers, including allowing for the reimbursement of partial services that do not result in a dental service being provided;
- That the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) share with the Committee the Sedation Dentistry Report totals using the current Missouri rates as well as rates that are 80 percent of the usual and customary rate;
- That KDHE provide a fiscal note regarding the cost to raise the dental code G0330 to the current Medicare rate of \$3,087 and index the full rate in future years to the current Medicare reimbursement rate;

Oral Health Kansas and our partners are advocating for a Medicaid dental rate increase based on the Missouri Medicaid dental rates, which are in line with about 80% of the usual and customary rates. A list of the organizations joining in this advocacy is [available on our website](#). The rate increase was recommended by the House Social Services Budget Committee and was accepted by the full House Appropriations Committee on February 7. The House Appropriations Committee also included funding in their budget to increase the rate for the hospital facility fee G0330 to \$2,500.

In 2022, the Missouri Legislature increased their Medicaid dental rates to the level included in the House Appropriations Committee's budget bill. Missouri paired their rate increase with a Dental Medicaid Facilitator program, providing technical assistance to dental offices to help them learn to become Medicaid providers. By 2024:

- The number of Medicaid dental providers in Missouri increased by 449;
- The number of Missouri Medicaid members who received dental care increased by over 80,000; and
- The number of rural counties without a Medicaid dental provider was cut from 36 to 17.

Oral Health Kansas is launching a Dental Medicaid Facilitator program in spring 2025. The recent success in Missouri demonstrates the effectiveness of combining a meaningful rate increase with technical assistance for providers in growing the Medicaid dental provider network. **Oral Health Kansas and our partners are prepared to implement a rate increase by recruiting new Medicaid dental providers in the Kansas provider network.**

Additional recommendations

- Reviewing the scope of practice of certified registered nurse anesthetists to determine if the authority to procure their own medicines under a U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration license could be included;
 - Our understanding is that SB 67 addresses this year and that it is being heard in the Senate Public Health & Welfare Committee.
- Providing a complete and accurate list of dental providers and anesthesiologists providing sedation dentistry that parents and other providers can easily access and know who they can call for assistance;
 - Oral Health Kansas is working with our partners on compiling a reliable list of the sedation dental care providers enrolled in the Medicaid program. We hope to be able to report on this in a few months.
- Consumer education regarding the importance of the connection between dental care and overall long-term health care;
 - This is the core of Oral Health Kansas' work and is one of the main focus areas of our new Pathways to Oral Health project. We and our partners will promote existing education programs for consumers and providers this year as well as develop new programs. Programs include:
 - Feeling Good About Your Smile: A ninety-minute hands-on oral health education program for people with IDD
 - Project ECHO: A five-part didactic and case-study education program for dental teams to learn more about providing dental care for people with IDD
 - Video series: A new series of short videos for people with IDD on subjects such as using adaptive tools to make toothbrushing easier
- Exploring dental incentives with the intention of recruiting more dentists in the KanCare program;
 - Another part of our Pathways to Oral Health project includes exploring incentives to encourage more dentists to participate in the KanCare program. The new Dental Medicaid Facilitator program includes an outreach campaign and technical assistance to dental providers to help them overcome any administrative barriers to becoming KanCare providers. Along with this program, we are convening a Dental Provider Advisory Group and will spend time with them this year exploring potential additional incentives that could be implemented on our own or through KDHE and the managed care organizations.
- Support for the My Dental Care Passport.
 - The final component of our Pathways to Oral Health project involves [My Dental Care Passport](#). We have completed a re-design of the Passport and are in the process of working with stakeholders to update portions of it. Later this spring we will launch an outreach campaign to promote the use of the Passport by individuals with disabilities and dental offices. We welcome the opportunity to share information and updates about the Passport with legislators.

We remain grateful to the Special Committee on Sedation Dentistry's review of the complicated and important issues people face when dental care provided under sedation is their only option. The recommendations the Committee made were thorough, and we look forward to working with this Committee to follow up on them and ensure Kansans have improved access to sedation dental care.

2025 Kansas Oral Health Report Card

This month Oral Health Kansas is releasing its fifth report comparing Kansas' oral health grade to the nation's performance. The Kansas Oral Health Report Card shows that our state is doing many things right, but that we have a long way to go to ensure that all Kansans can maintain their oral health. For the fifth year in a row, Kansas received a grade of C on a series of indicators.

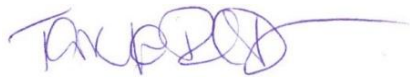
Key takeaways:

- The percentage of children under age 17 who had a dental visit improved, especially in comparison to the national percentage.
- The overall grade went down from a score of 2.3 in 2024 to 2.1 in 2025.
- The fact that the grades are stubbornly the same from year to year and vary only a little is emblematic of the fact that more work needs to be done to improve the Medicaid dental provider network and to provide education to consumers and providers.

The 2025 Kansas Oral Health Report Card is included with this testimony.

We appreciate the Committee's leadership in improving the dental program in Kansas. Thank you for the opportunity to share this testimony. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,



Tanya Dorf Brunner, Executive Director
tdorf@oralhealthkansas.org