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House Social Services Budget Committee

Kansas Department of Health and Environment Budget January 28, 2025

Chairman Buehler and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on the KDHE Budget. 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.

My colleague Dr. MaryAnne Lynch Small outlined the major challenges in the Kansas Medicaid dental program. As she said, two of the biggest barriers for dental providers becoming Medicaid providers have been addressed: (1) The Legislature has invested in dental coverage for adults, and now both adults and children enrolled in Medicaid have dental coverage. (2) Oral Health Kansas and our partners are working on a variety of educational programs for both dental providers and consumers. The other two hurdles are administrative challenges and affordability. The good news is that we have a clear model to follow to address both hurdles.

Missouri Model

In 2022 the Missouri Legislature increased their Medicaid dental rates to be competitive with commercial rates. At the same time, our sister organization, Missouri Coalition for Oral Health, received a grant to develop a new program called the "Dental Medicaid Facilitator program." This program couples an outreach campaign with technical assistance to dental offices to help them become Medicaid providers. By combining a meaningful rate increase with direct outreach and technical assistance to dental providers, Missouri has seen significant success.

- In the first year of implementation, the number of Missouri Medicaid dental providers grew by 184.
- In the second year, the number grew by another 265.
- Over two years, Missouri increased its Medicaid dental provider network by nearly 450 providers!
- 80,000 more Missourians received care as a result of this the rate increase and Dental Medicaid Facilitator program.
- At the start of their Dental Medicaid Facilitator program, 36 Missouri counties had no Medicaid dental provider. That number has dropped to 17 counties.
- Missouri Coalition for Oral Health is beginning its third year of their Dental Medicaid Facilitator program with grant funding.

Getting Started in Kansas

Oral Health Kansas has been awarded a grant to start a Kansas Dental Medicaid Facilitator program. We have hired a Facilitator and are preparing to launch our outreach program. This program is designed to help dental offices with the myriad administrative barriers and coach individual offices as they apply to become Medicaid providers and begin to bill for services. We will include things like sample policies offices can implement to address their concerns. Such policies will include setting limits on their patient bases and managing no-show rates. The administrative hurdles can be managed, especially with technical assistance, and we are preparing to do that with the new Dental Medicaid Facilitator program modeled after Missouri.

The Final Hurdle

As Dr. Lynch Small and I have described, there are four hurdles to a fruitful and economically sound Medicaid dental program, including the Medicaid dental provider network:

1. Coverage of dental services
2. Education of consumers and healthcare providers
3. Administrative barriers to being a Medicaid provider
4. Medicaid dental rates

With the Legislature's investments in Medicaid dental coverage and grant funding to deliver educational programs and build a Dental Medicaid Facilitator program, only one hurdle remains: Medicaid dental rates.

Dentists tell us over and over again that low Medicaid rates is their top reason for not providing care. A November 2024 report from the American Dental Association's Health Policy Institute showed that four out of five dentists say low Medicaid rates is their top barrier.¹

Kansas Medicaid dental rates are significantly lower than Medicaid dental rates in neighboring states, private dental insurance, and rates set by dental offices.

- The Medicaid dental rates in the neighboring states of Colorado and Missouri are as much as twice as high as Kansas Medicaid dental rates.
- Kansas Medicaid rates are approximately 60% of private dental insurance rates.
- Overall, Kansas Medicaid rates in 2024 were 37% of the average fee-for-service rates set by dental offices.

Many dental offices can stay busy and productive without taking private dental insurance or Medicaid. They are small businesses, and if the rates paid by Medicaid do not make financial sense, they do not have a reason to provide care to Medicaid patients.

Over three dozen statewide and local organizations, including many dental offices, are joining with us in asking for funding to cover basic preventive dental care. They include disabilities advocates and providers, local health departments, behavioral health advocates, early childhood advocates, and educators. The following are organizations that have signed onto our advocacy coalition to support this request:

AcruxKC	Kansas City metro
Advocates in Communities Team (ACT) of SouthCentral Kansas	South Central Kansas
ARC of Douglas County	Lawrence
Arcare, Inc.	Northeast Kansas
Benevis	Statewide
Celebrate Dental and Braces	Kansas City metro
Children's Alliance of Kansas	Statwide
Cottonwood Dental	Maize & Wichita
Crawford County Mental Health Center	Southeast Kansas
Disability Rights Center of Kansas	Statewide
Enable Dental	Statewide
Families Together Inc./Family to Family Health Information Center	Statewide
Flint Hills Dental Group	Andover
Flint Hills Technical College	Emporia
Gove County Health Department	Gove County
Mark A Herzog D.D.S. P.A.	Ellsworth
Honey Bee Pediatric Dental Co.	Lawrence
Hunter Health	Wichita
ICTeeth Pediatric Dentistry	Wichita
InterHab	Statewide
Kansas Action for Children	Statewide
Kansas Appleseed	Statewide
Kansas Association of Local Health Departments	Statewide
Kansas Council on Developmental Disabilities	Statewide
Kansas Dental Association	Statewide
Kansas Recruitment and Retention Center	Statewide
Kidspace Pediatric Dentistry	Wichita
Kim Knowland, RDH	Topeka
Melanie Jacobs	Wichita
NAMI KANSAS INC	Statewide
Ned Todorov DDS	Wichita
Northwest Smile Center (formerly Rawlins County Dental Clinic)	Northwest Kansas
Olathe Pediatric Dental	Olathe
Osborne County Health Department	Osborne County
Pediatric Dentistry, LLC	Hutchinson
Rogers Family Dentistry	Arkansas City
State Avenue Dental	Kansas City
Tiny Teeth Pediatric Dentistry	Wichita
Tippin Dental Group	Newton
Wakim Cosmetic and Family Dentistry	Wichita

Budget Request

The Special Committee on Sedation Dentistry's Report to the 2025 Kansas Legislature recommended an overall dental rate increase. This Committee has been a true champion for extending dental care in Medicaid to adults, and it truly is paying off. Thousands of Kansans have accessed much needed and life changing care. You are changing lives for the

better. Oral Health Kansas and our partners are working on tearing down the education and administrative barriers to dental offices becoming Medicaid providers.

We ask the Social Services Budget Committee to tackle the final barrier of low Medicaid reimbursement rates by including \$16.9M SGF in the KDHE budget, which will result in an All Funds increase of \$44.3M.

The rate increase will put Kansas' rates at a level similar to that of Missouri.

The combination of dental coverage (done), education (in progress), administrative support (in progress), and rates are a proven formula to increasing the Medicaid dental provider network. Oral Health Kansas and our partners have the resources and capacity to continue the hard work of increasing the Medicaid dental provider network, and we will be successful when the rates increase to a level that is competitive enough to attract more dental offices.

Hospital Facility Fee: G0330

Sedation dental care is the most challenging type of dental care to access in our state. In fact, there was an interim study dedicated to the many complicated issues surrounding access to sedation dental care. For some people with disabilities or with complicated health issues, the only safe way to receive dental care is in a hospital setting. Very few people need this level of care, but it is nothing short of life saving for the people who do need it.

In September 2023, the Division of Health Care Finance began covering [G0330](#), a hospital facility fee code for sedation dental care. The Kansas Medicaid program is one of the first in the country to implement the code. This has the potential to be a pivotal tool to make hospital-based dental care feasible for the people who truly need this level of care. The purpose of G0330 is to reimburse the hospital for their operating room time. Dental care provided at the time is billed separately.

One of the biggest barriers to being able to receive dental care in a hospital setting is finding a hospital that can open its operating room schedule to include sedation dental care. Hospitals tell us the facility fees for other procedures done in operating rooms are higher. The current rate for G0330 in Kansas is \$1722.43. G0330 is based on a Medicare code, and the Medicare rate has now increased \$3,087. We would like to see the rate increase to the current federal Medicare rate to ensure hospitals will be able to open their operating rooms for dental care when necessary. People who are not able to access dental care in a hospital setting end up going without care at all when there is no hospital able to schedule time for the care they need. A change like this would keep the service more competitive with other operating room services and increase the likelihood of hospitals using it.

[The Special Committee on Sedation Dentistry made eight recommendations to the 2025 Legislature](#), and increasing the rate for G0330 to the Medicare rate of \$3,087 was one of those recommendations. The Division of Health Care Finance is unable to increase the rate without an appropriation from the Legislature.

Oral Health Kansas' request is for the Committee to include \$1.3M SGF for a total of \$3.4M All Funds to increase the rate for G0330 to \$3,087.

Donated Dental Services

The Donated Dental Services program is a cost-effective approach to ensuring people with disabilities who have no other source of dental coverage to get much needed and often life-saving dental care. The Donated Dental Services program has operated on an administrative budget of \$70,000 for a dozen years. This is not enough to keep up with inflation and the rising cost of administering the program.

We support increasing the budget for the Donated Dental Services program to \$125,000.

We appreciate this Committee's dedication to the Kansas Medicaid program and ensuring Kansans can lead happy, healthy, and productive lives. 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
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¹ American Dental Association's Health Policy Institute: "[Barriers to Dental Care Among Adult Medicaid Beneficiaries: A Comprehensive Analysis in Eight States](#)," November 2024