



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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Rate Advocacy Push as Legislative Session Begins

The 2026 Legislative Session began on Monday. Legislators are scheduled to conclude their business by April 11, so this will be a fast session. Legislative leaders have signaled their priorities will include tax cuts and cutting an additional \$200 million from the state budget. Because they want to move fast and limit

spending, it will be a challenging year to advocate for more state investments in Medicaid.

Over the past several years legislators have made significant investments in the Kansas Medicaid program by establishing adult dental benefits and enacting a \$10 million rate increase. The work is not over, because the dental rates still lag behind neighboring states and commercial rates. Another \$30 million is needed to get the rates to a level that is sustainable for dental practices and creates meaningful access to dental providers for consumers.

This year Oral Health Kansas will again lead the advocacy to finish the job to increase the rates. In order to make progress on the rate increase in a challenging environment, we will need dental providers to tell the story of trying to run a small business while losing money in Medicaid and consumers to tell the story of trying to find a dental provider that takes Medicaid. Legislators need to know how lives change when people can access dental care and how businesses thrive when they can afford to provide care for their underserved neighbors.

Your organization can join the advocacy coalition to finish the job.

- Joining the advocacy coalition means your organization will be listed on our website as a supporter of the rate increase.
- You will also receive frequent updates on the advocacy efforts as well as advocacy alerts that give you the opportunity to contact legislators or provide testimony.

The legislative session will go by quickly and we need to start the work NOW! [Here](#) is the link to sign up.

You can learn more about all of Oral Health Kansas' policy priorities and our 2025 policy accomplishments at [this link](#).



Championing Health, Confidence and Connection

Special Olympics Kansas is one of the Pathways to Oral Health project partners. We are grateful that their [Health and Fitness program](#) is highlighting the importance of oral health for Special Olympics athletes! Erin McDaniel, Health and Fitness Manager for Special Olympics Kansas shared why she enjoys doing this work. In her role, Erin oversees all health and fitness programming statewide. From medical screenings and research partnerships to athlete-led health initiatives and wellness education, her work spans a wide spectrum aimed at helping athletes live healthier, more confident lives. [Read more](#) about what Erin has to say about why oral health is important to Special Olympics!



Kansas Mission of Mercy Volunteer Registration Open

The Kansas Mission of Mercy (KMOM) will be held on January 30 and 31, 2026 in Manhattan at the Kansas National Guard Armory. If you're interested in volunteering, registration is now open! There are different areas that you can be helpful with. You don't have to volunteer both days or all day, just an hour or two would help! Hand out food, walk with patients or if you speak Spanish, you can help interpret!

Oral Health Kansas (OHK) staff assists with exit surveys after patients are done with their services. If you're interested in helping OHK with exit surveys, let us know and we'll guide you in registering to volunteer. Check out the volunteer registration information [here](#).

For patients, they can visit this [link](#) for details on what services are provided and what to expect. Please share the flyer in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

Thank you to the Kansas Dental Charitable Foundation for managing the logistics for the event, volunteers and all of the patients!



Early Bird Registration Ends This Month

The National Oral Health Conference (NOHC) will be held on April 13-15 with weekend workshops on April 11-12. The conference will be held in Oklahoma City this year. Oral Health Kansas staff will be presenting on two of the conference days!

The early bird registration ends on January 31. Network with advocates and dental professionals from different states. Conference participants can earn up to 18.75 continuing education hours during the conference (Mon - Wed) and an additional 8.5 hours with optional weekend workshops on Saturday and Sunday for a total of a possible 27.25 hours! You can find out more information [here](#) and [register now!](#)



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](#).
- **Webinar:** Addressing Medical Emergencies in Dentistry, January 22,

6:00pm-7:00pm CST. Register [here](#).

- Save the date! The 2026 Conference on Oral Health will be Friday, November 13.



Congratulations to Dental Champions Alumni, Shawn Oprisiu, RDH, who recently graduated with a Master of Public Health from the University of Missouri. What an accomplishment! Shawn is the Director of Dental Outreach at Swope Health in Kansas City and she presented at our 2025 annual conference. Her passion for dentistry and her community shows in her work. Congratulations again!



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!

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