



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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2022 Legislative Session Begins on Monday

Legislators from across the state will return to Topeka for the start of the 2022 Legislative Session on Monday, January 10th. As this is the second year in the legislative biennium, legislators will be able to consider bills that did not pass last year as well as introduce new bills and consider new ideas. This fall, Oral

Health Kansas released an Advocacy Toolkit to help advocates of all experience levels feel confident speaking up during the Legislative Session. Check it out [here](#)!

What will be OHK's focus?

In 2021, Oral Health Kansas introduced SB227, which would add a comprehensive adult dental benefit to the Kansas Medicaid State Plan. SB227 will remain the focus for Oral Health Kansas in 2022. If your organization is interested in signing on in support of increased adult dental benefits, fill out this form. Learn more about our advocacy efforts on this issue [here](#). View our full list of 2022 Policy Priorities [here](#).

Where can I find out who my legislators are?

Use [this tool](#) to find your State Representative and Senator and how to contact them. It is never too late to start building a relationship with your legislator!

How can I listen to committee hearings?

Live audio of hearings is available [here](#).

Live video of hearings is available on YouTube [here](#).



New Federal Report on Oral Health Released

Oral Health in America: Advances and Challenges was released as a twenty-year follow-up to the seminal [Oral Health in America: A Report of the Surgeon General](#). This report recognizes the initiatives and efforts of the past two decades in improving oral health care for all, and reviews new directions and innovative strategies that contribute to preventing and treating oral health problems. The report also identifies current disparities and inequalities in oral health care and recognizes the importance of oral health in improving health equity, thereby improving the overall health of our nation.

Oral Health Kansas will share more about the new report with you in the coming weeks. Read the full report and a summary in the links below.

[Full Report](#)

[Executive Summary](#)



Kansas Mission of Mercy Coming to Hays

The 21st annual Kansas Mission of Mercy (KMOM) is headed to Hays on February 18-19, 2022, at the Ellis County Fairgrounds. KMOM is a free dental clinic hosted annually by the Kansas Dental Charitable Foundation. To date, Kansas dentists have provided 31,135 Kansans free dental care valued at over \$20 million through KMOM.

KMOM is not possible without the help of volunteers! There are volunteer opportunities for anyone, including dental professionals, medical/pharmacy, non-healthcare professionals, and interpreters. Learn more about volunteering [here](#).

We are still awaiting additional information for patients and will share as information becomes available!



Gum Disease Linked to Increased Risk of Mental Health Problems

A [December 2021 study](#) out of the University of Birmingham found that poor dental health can also increase a person's risk of suffering from depression and anxiety. Through the review of medical records, the study determined those with gum disease at the start of the study had a 37% higher risk of developing mental health problems over the next three years. The study

also examined the impact of dental health and physical health. Fox4KC shared additional information on the study [here](#).

Improving Racial Equity in Kansas: A Three-Part Series

A three-part series, hosted by United Methodist Health Ministry Fund, will explore recommendations developed from the Governor's Commission on Racial Equity and Justice to address racial equity in Kansas by focusing on social determinants of health. The Commission's recommendations address items that may take place on the state/agency, legislative, and/or local level and each webinar in the series will focus on a specific level of government.



Oral Health Kansas is pleased to be a co-sponsor for this webinar series. Find out more about each webinar below, including dates/times and topics covered.

- Legislative Change: Thursday, January 6 at 12PM
- Local Change: Thursday, February 10 at 12PM
- State/Agency Change: Thursday, March 10 at 12PM

[Register for individual webinars or the complete series here.](#)



Peggy Kelly, former Kansas Head Start Association (KHSA) Executive Director, was awarded the Kansas State Children's Champion by the Region VII Head Start Association in December! Peggy was a true

oral health champion and advocate for Kansas families during her time at KHSA and we were proud to call her a partner and friend. What a well-deserved award! Congratulations, Peggy!



Photo courtesy of:
KS Head Start Association



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.



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