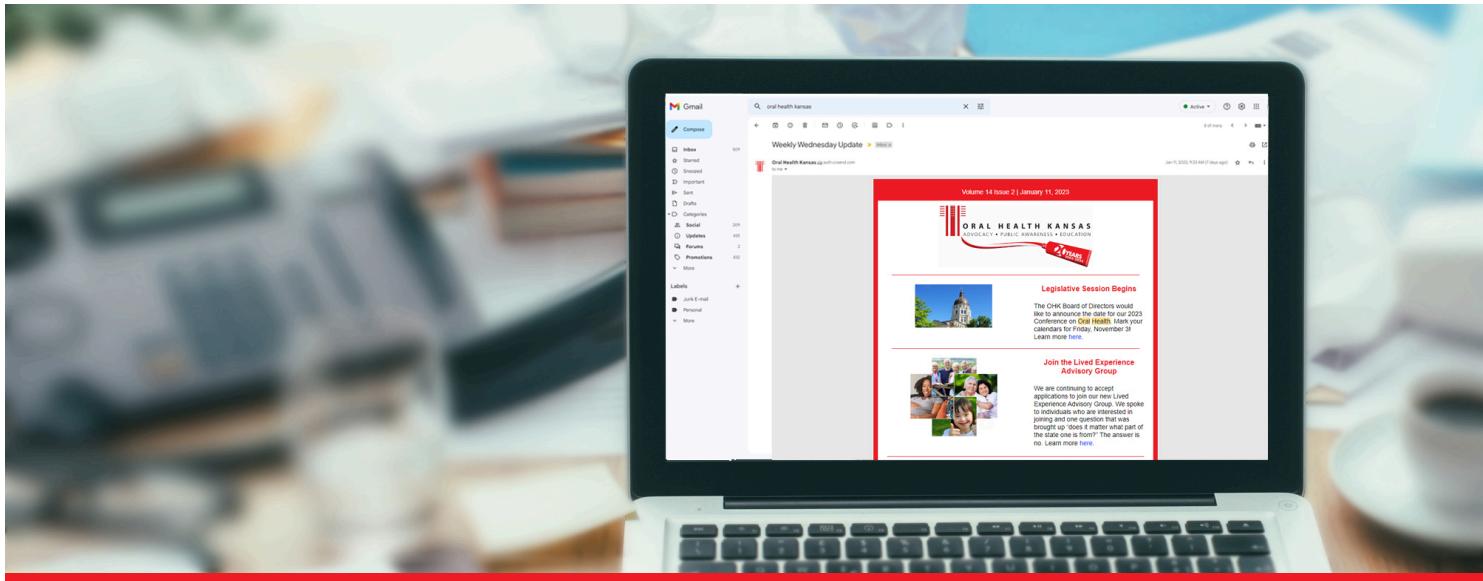




ORAL HEALTH KANSAS
ADVOCACY • PUBLIC AWARENESS • EDUCATION



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](#).

January 7, 2026

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Scan the QR code



or click here to sign up for our [Weekly Wednesday Update](#).



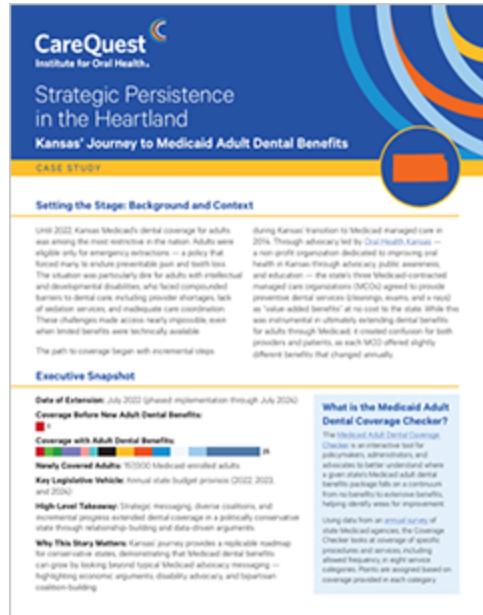
Partner With Us to Advance Medicaid Dental Rates

The legislative session begins next week on January 13. We're preparing and need your help! We are still recruiting organizations to join our advocacy for finishing the job on the Medicaid dental rate increase. If your organization has not signed on yet, you can do so at the link below. If you know of other local and state organizations that would like to join the

advocacy, please share the link with them. 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.

[Here](#) is the link to sign up.

If you have any questions, you can reach us at info@oralhealthkansas.org



Kansas Featured in National Publication

The State of Kansas was recently featured in a national publication by Care Quest Institute for Oral Health, in an article titled [*"Strengthening State Medicaid Adult Dental Benefits: Five Success Stories."*](#) The article highlights Oral Health Kansas' strategic persistence and continued efforts to strengthen Medicaid adult dental benefits, even in the face of challenges. This national recognition reinforces the importance of sustained advocacy, collaboration, and long-term commitment to improving oral health access across our state and our work to fully strengthen Medicaid adult dental benefits.



How to Use 'My Dental Care Passport'

If you have used the [My Dental Care Passport](#), that's great! It's a powerful tool to help make a dental visit run smoothly. If you're just getting started, we want to make things easy for you. We have explained step by step how both dental offices and consumers can use the My Dental Care Passport. You can also download a helpful user guide with tips! Find out more information on the [Pathways to Oral Health](#) website.

Should you have any questions or need help with the My Dental Care Passport, you can email us at info@oralhealthkansas.org.

New Delta Dental Benefit for People with Disabilities

Delta Dental of Kansas premiered a new dental benefit for people with disabilities this month. It includes coverage for practice visits, additional cleanings throughout the year, anesthesia when necessary, and dental case management. The new benefit is available for people with physical, developmental, mental, sensory, behavioral, cognitive, or emotional disabilities. Find out more information [here](#).

Dental care is the number one unmet healthcare need for people with disabilities, and this new coverage option in Kansas is a way for people with disabilities to access the care they need with the supports that make it easier. We are happy to see this enhanced coverage now available for Kansans with disabilities.

Dental providers who would like to learn more about providing care for people with disabilities, including the importance of practice visits, sensory accommodations, and case management can watch the recordings of **"Accessible Oral Health 2025 ECHO: Building Confidence in Dental Teams to Serve People with Disabilities."** This series was sponsored by Oral Health Kansas and funded by a grant from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment – Division of Health Care Finance (KDHE-DHCF) through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and underwriting from Delta Dental of Kansas. All five of the ECHO sessions are available free on-demand. [Click here](#) to access them.



Mental Wellness Month

January is Mental Health Wellness Month. Mental health and oral health are deeply connected. Stress, anxiety, and depression can directly impact oral health outcomes. Mental health challenges may lead to skipped dental visits, poor oral hygiene, increased tobacco or substance use, and unhealthy eating habits. Not maintaining one's oral health can also lead to low self esteem and avoiding socializing or applying for jobs. Chronic stress is also linked to conditions such as teeth grinding (bruxism), jaw pain, gum disease, and can weaken the immune response. Medications may also cause dry mouth, making your mouth feel uncomfortable. Have sugar free gum or sugar free hard candy available to mitigate dry mouth.

Addressing oral health needs is an essential part of supporting mental wellness, particularly for individuals facing economic, social, or mental health challenges. Seeking regular dental care as well as mental health care services are important ways to help improve oral health and mental health. For oral health Tips and Tricks, visit our [website](#). You can find information on medications and oral health, tobacco and vaping as well as dry mouth.



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.



As we begin the new year, please join us as we welcome our slate of officers for the upcoming term:

President: Melanie Simmer-Beck, PhD, RDH

Past President: Tami Allen

Vice President: Linda J. Sheppard, JD

Treasurer: Charles (Chuck) Abbick, DDS

Secretary: Debra Meisenheimer



We're looking forward to their guidance moving forward! You can see the list of our board members on our [website](#).



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!

Follow Us



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