



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.

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## November 16, 2022

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## We Invite You to Join our New Lived Experience Advisory Group

Oral Health Kansas promotes equal access to dental care. We are concerned about the needs of people who are underserved. We want to genuinely understand their experience and its effect on their lives. To be an effective advocacy organization, we would like to connect with people who can help us improve access to dental care for more Kansans; therefore, we created the Lived Experience Advisory Group. We are looking for people with lived experience who have had trouble receiving dental care. They also have Medicaid experience that can help improve the system.

Members of the Dental Care Access: Lived Experience Advisory Group will use their personal experience to:

- Review and supply feedback on materials
- Help with strategies to collect stories from the community
- Influence Oral Health Kansas on our policy development

We will meet quarterly, and stipends will be provided. If you are interested in joining, please fill out the [form](#). [Share our flyer](#) with your networks and individuals who may be interested. If you have any questions, email Devaki at [dmenon@oralhealthkansas.org](mailto:dmenon@oralhealthkansas.org).



## World Diabetes Day

We celebrated World Diabetes Day on Monday, November 14. Diabetes occurs when blood sugar level is high. There are three types of diabetes: type 1, type 2, and gestational diabetes. Type 1 diabetes is usually seen in children, teens, and young adults. Type 2 diabetes develops over many years and is usually diagnosed in adults.

Gestational diabetes develops in pregnant women who have never had diabetes. Diabetes develops in people of all ages, although in greater frequency in African-Americans and Hispanics. Research has shown that diabetes affects racial and ethnic minority and low-income adult populations in the U.S. disproportionately.

Taking good care of one's mouth plays an integral part in managing high blood sugar. The most common mouth problem with diabetes is gum disease. There are other common mouth problems such as dental cavities, thrush, dry mouth and burning mouth syndrome that can also be caused due to diabetes. If you have diabetes, your gum disease may be severe and take longer to recover. Diabetes can also be difficult to manage if you have gum disease ([Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2021](#)). Therefore, treating gums can help in maintaining blood sugar levels. It is essential to visit the dentist frequently to prevent complications. We are happy to share that KanCare is now offering periodontal (gum)care, fillings, crowns, and silver diamine fluoride for adults enrolled in Medicaid. Visit [Oral Health Kansas](#) to learn more about the new Medicaid Adult Dental Benefits.



## Election Brings Few Changes

Throughout election season this year Oral Health Kansas encouraged you to get involved in the election process, meet your candidates, and vote. As we have seen in the news, the election in the state and across the country brought few surprises this year. We would like

share a brief review of the election results in Kansas and the potential policy impacts.

Kansas Governor Laura Kelly was elected to a second term. This means we are not likely to see big changes in leadership at state agencies such as the Department of Health and Environment or Department on Aging and Disabilities Services. No changes have been announced, and without a change in the Governor's office we are likely to see consistent leadership in those agencies.

Every seat in the Kansas House of Representatives was up for election. The ratio of Republicans to Democrats changed very little, but Democrats picked up one seat. There now are 85 Republicans and 40 Democrats. It takes 84 votes in the House to override a Governor's veto, so Republicans maintain a margin to override vetoes.

While there is not big change in the Kansas House overall, there will be changes in leadership. A new Speaker of the House will be elected in December, and it is likely there will be changes in leadership and membership of some of the committees Oral Health Kansas works most closely with. These committees include Health and Human Services and Social Services Budget. At least two members will not return to Social Services Budget and six members will not return to Health and Human Services. We will not know the committee makeup and leadership until mid-December.

The other major outcome of the election in Kansas is the failure of a proposed constitutional amendment that would have given the Kansas Legislature the authority to veto state agency rules and regulations. The margin of victory on this ballot measure was narrow, so there is a possibility it will be challenged.

In the coming weeks Oral Health Kansas will announce our 2023 public policy priorities and share opportunities to educate new and returning legislators about oral health policy issues. Please keep watching for our policy updates and let us know when you have questions.



## National Family Caregivers Month

Family Caregivers Month is celebrated each November to recognize and honor family caregivers across the country. Many caregivers are responsible for taking care of a loved one and that includes one's teeth once they are no longer able to for themselves. Some adults may need to be reminded to brush their teeth and to maintain their oral health. Caregivers have a tough job of having to clean someone's teeth, especially if the person is suffering from an illness such as Alzheimer's. One way to brush their teeth is to use the "tell-show-do" approach. Tell them what you are going to do, show them, and then do what you've described.

There are various resources that can help caregivers maneuver

brushing teeth of others:

- Specialized Care Co. has DVD that demonstrates step-by-step toothbrushing techniques that are accurate, safe and respectful. How to brush another's teeth video:

<https://specializedcare.com/products/how-to-brush-anothers-teeth-dvd>. OHK also has a helpful video on our website to help with brushing the teeth of others:

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/bcfeE8nfvKk?rel=0>

- A guide for home health agencies to use for staff orientation, training and coaching as well as for seniors and family caregivers. This guide can help monitor oral health problems.

[http://www.oralhealthkansas.org/Populations/Guide%20for%20Home%20Health%20Care%20Providers12-2011%20\(2\).pd](http://www.oralhealthkansas.org/Populations/Guide%20for%20Home%20Health%20Care%20Providers12-2011%20(2).pd)

- News In Health has a [series of fact sheets](#), such as tips to brushing, flossing and dry mouth, to help caregivers learn more about protecting oral health in older adults.

- OHK has two resources to help with mobility challenges.

<http://www.oralhealthkansas.org/OlderAdults.html>

For more resources, visit our website at [www.oralhealthkansas.org](http://www.oralhealthkansas.org).



## National Rural Health Day

National Rural Health Day (NRHD) falls on November 17 and is an opportunity to celebrate the power of rural by honoring the selfless, community-minded, can-do spirit that prevails in rural America. It also gives us a chance to bring to light the unique

healthcare challenges that rural residents face and showcase the efforts of rural healthcare providers, state offices of rural health, and other rural stakeholders to address those challenges.

Here are some ways to celebrate NRHD in your community, school or business:

- Send a note to your healthcare team thanking them for their dedication to serving a rural population
- Create an NRHD poster with thank you messages or drawings. Deliver it to your local hospital/clinic
- Use the #PowerOfRural and #NationalRuralHealthDay hashtags on social media

Learn more about [NRHD](#).

Last week, we shared two programs in Kansas that have tried to make dental care more available in the state's rural areas. The KIND Program includes three opportunities to encourage dentists to locate in rural areas of Kansas. To learn more about the KIND program, click [here](#). The application deadline is December 1. The State Loan Repayment Program (SLRP) is a program that helps recruit and retain medical, nursing, dental and behavioral/mental health care professionals at eligible practice sites in federally designated Health Professional Shortage Areas in the appropriate discipline of the health care professional's licensure (medical, dental or mental health). Click [here](#) to learn more about the SLRP.





## Upcoming Events

- **Webinar: Rural Oral Health ECHO on Veteran Oral Health**, November 30 at 12pm CST. Click [here](#) to register.
- **Webinar: Evaluation with Health Equity in Mind**, December 1 at 2 p.m. CST. Register [here](#).
- **Webinar: SDF and More: New Ways to Manage Caries**, December 8 at 6 p.m. CST. Register [here](#).



Welcome Davette McCoy, MHS, RDH, ECP III, to the OHK board of directors. Davette is a Dental Champion Class 8 member and represents the Kansas Dental Hygienists Association on our board. She is also the 2022 Dental Champion Award Winner

and serves on the Kansas Dental Board. Davette is a dental hygienist at Hunter Health Clinic in Wichita and is the author of Goodnight Teeth: A Nighttime Brush Book. We look forward to having Davette on our board.



## Sugary Drink Display

Click [here](#) to learn more about sugary drink display reservations!

## Follow Us



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