

## 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](#).

February 14, 2024

Volume 15, Issue 6

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**Weekly  
Wednesday  
Update.**

## Busy Week at the Capitol

It's been an eventful week at the Capitol this week. Nearly two dozen organizations joined with us in making our case to legislators to include coverage of dental exams, x-rays, and cleanings for adults in Medicaid. **Yesterday the House Social Services Budget Committee recommended funding to include this basic preventive coverage for adults!** Tomorrow we will make our case to the members of the Senate Ways and Means Human Services



Subcommittee with the hopes that they also will include the same recommendation in their budget report.

This week is the start of the process to try to get coverage of preventive dental care for adults. We are hopeful and cautiously optimistic that the success of the past two years in getting coverage of fillings, crowns, periodontal care, and dentures will continue with more success this year.

Also this week the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee passed [SB 103](#), which would eliminate the rule in the Kansas Dental Practice Act that requires that dentists who own practices must be in the practice for at least 20% of the time the practice is open and treating patients. This bill was heard by the committee in 2023 and again this month. The bill passed by a narrow margin of 5-4. It now will be sent to the full Senate for their consideration.

Check out all of our [testimony](#) this year and our [preventive dental care advocacy webpage](#) for more resources. Keep following us in the Weekly Wednesday Update and on social media for news, updates, and potential advocacy alerts.



## Kansas Adult Dental Benefits Featured in New Op-Ed

We were proud to be featured in an opinion piece in the Kansas Reflector last week. CareQuest Institute Chief Equity Officer and Executive Vice President Dr. Kaz Rafia and Oral Health Kansas Executive Director Tanya Dorf Brunner co-authored an op-ed about the Kansas Medicaid program's coverage of adult dental services since 2022.

In [“Expansion of Medicaid adult dental benefits in Kansas a win for all”](#) Rafia and Dorf Brunner describe the importance of dental care in overall health and note that Kansas was among the states that was overdue for implementing adult dental coverage in Medicaid. The story recounts recent studies on the effectiveness of adult dental care and notes that Kansas has joined “several states nationwide in taking crucial steps toward increasing access to oral health care.”

Oral Health Kansas is proud to share this opinion piece and grateful to [CareQuest Institute](#) for their co-authorship and to [Kansas Reflector](#) for publishing it.



## Resources to Share with Families During Children's Dental Health Month

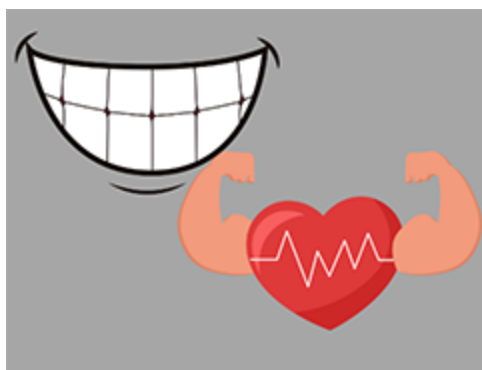
During National Children's Dental Health Month, it's important for us to get information out to families in our communities and teach them how crucial children's oral health is for their overall health. Various elements can affect our oral health, including sugary foods and drinks, brushing two times a day and flossing. Seeing a dentist twice a year can help check for any issues in your mouth before it gets worse.

Oral Health Kansas' website has free resources to share with families. Our [Tips and Tricks](#) fact sheets are in English and Spanish to download or print. [Brush Book Bed](#) is a program by the American Academy of Pediatrics, to educate families with children to have healthy oral health and bedtime routines. Oral Health Kansas has implemented in Kansas through safety net clinics, Parent as Teachers, Healthy Families, Head Starts and health departments in every region of the state. This concept is for families to establish nightly routines to include brushing teeth, reading a book, and going to bed at the same time each night. Do you deal with Brushing Battles with your little ones? Our [Beating Brushing Battles](#) has games and several videos to watch together and provides strategies to help with the battles!

The [American Dental Association](#) provides free resources to help promote good oral health. The resources are also available in English and Spanish and can easily be downloaded.

## Healthy Mouth Leads to a Healthy Heart

February is American Heart Month, a time when all people can focus on a healthy heart! Having a healthy heart is more than just getting up and exercising. It's also about watching what you eat. Oral health and heart disease are connected by the spread of bacteria - and other germs - from your mouth to other parts of your body through the bloodstream. Nearly twice as many non-Hispanic Black or Mexican American adults have untreated cavities as non-



Hispanic White adults. Among working-age US adults, over 40% of low-income and non-Hispanic Black adults have untreated tooth decay. Moderate to severe periodontal disease is linked to higher risk for heart disease.

What can we do? We may sound like a broken record, but eating healthy and limiting sugary drinks is a good step towards a healthy heart. You don't need to cut out all sugary drinks or unhealthy foods, just eat and drink in

**moderation!** Check out our Tips and Tricks on [Healthy Eating for a Healthy Mouth](#) and [Soft Drinks and Cavities](#). Both are also available in Spanish.

To learn more about heart health, please talk to your health care provider or visit [CDC.gov/heartdisease](https://www.cdc.gov/heartdisease).



## 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:** Abuse, Neglect and Trafficking: Our Responsibility, February 21, 6p-7p CST. Register [here](#).
- **Webinar:** The Critical Role of Black Dental Providers, February 22 from 12p-1pm CST. Register [here](#).
- **Webinar:** Community and Population Health Projects, Wednesday, February 28 from 6p-7p.m. CST. Register [here](#).
- Missouri Oral Health Policy Conference, March 7-8, 2024, DoubleTree by Hilton, Jefferson City, Missouri. Register [here](#).
- Alliance for a Healthy Kansas monthly meetings, [Events | Alliance for a Healthy Kansas 2022 \(expandkancare.com\)](#).
- **Save the date!** 2024 Conference on Oral Health will be Friday, November 8.



The Missouri Dental Association has recently named Aaron Bumann, DDS, 2023 Dentist of the Year. Dr. Bumann is a pediatric dentist in Kansas City, Missouri. He presented at the 2023 Conference on Oral Health on why he's a Medicaid provider and the importance of serving Medicaid clients. Bumann is committed in providing services to people who struggle to get access to care.



Check out our Adult Dental Benefits webpage for [frequently asked questions](#) for providers and a [short interview](#) with Dr. Bumann on the myths and facts about being a Medicaid provider.



## 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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