



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 18, 2026

Volume 17, Issue 7

Scan the QR code



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

Halo Ridge Breaks Ground on a More Accessible Future

Last week, OHK staff attended the Halo Ridge Groundbreaking Event in Olathe, Kansas. The Halo Ridge development will transform 64 acres of historically undeveloped land into an “ultra-accessible sports-themed amusement park called [Michaels Wonderworld](#),” a state-of-the-art sports arena, and 150-bed hotel, with space for restaurants, retail and other features. The heart behind Halo Ridge is to bolster underserved youth sports and help families who have children with disabilities, connecting them with resources and fun experiences. A medical clinic named the “[Halo Care Collective](#)” is anticipated to open this spring in an existing building across the street from the project site. Services at the clinic will include:



James, Michael and Sarah Arkell, Gov. Laura Kelly and Olathe Mayor John Bacon celebrate the Halo Ridge groundbreaking. Photo credit Kate Mays.

multiple therapies, behavioral health care, financial planning, medical equipment services, dental, vision and salon services with specialists trained to work with clients with special needs. Oral Health Kansas is in conversations with Halo Care Collective about including oral health education programs for people with disabilities in the new facility.

We are excited about the opportunities Halo is bringing to the community and the region, and we are looking forward to being a part of it.



OHK Presents During Parent Educational Series

OHK's Education Coordinator, Abby Richwine, presented as part of the Kansas LEND Parent Educational Series, where she shared information about the Pathways to Oral Health project and the wide range of resources available to parents and caregivers. She provided an overview of the Consumer Toolkit for Recruiting Dentists, highlighting how families can use it to advocate for and identify dental providers.

In addition, Abby reviewed the [Confidence In Every Smile](#) video series and discussed various adaptive aides that can support daily oral care. The group also talked through practical strategies for when an individual is resistant to brushing. Participants were guided through the "[Finding a Dentist](#)" page and informed about who to contact with questions or for additional support. The session generated thoughtful questions and meaningful discussion from attendees.

Find more helpful tips on the [Pathways to Oral Health Project website](#).



National Caregivers Day

February 20 is National Caregivers Day. Caregivers play so many roles and all very important ones. It can become a full time job and we want to provide as many resources as we can to be of assistance. Everyday tasks that seem simple can become real challenges. Something as routine as brushing a loved one's teeth isn't always easy, especially for individuals with sensory sensitivities. The feeling of another person brushing their teeth can be overwhelming or uncomfortable, and resistance is common. These moments can be frustrating and exhausting, even though they come from a place of care and love.

That's why providing caregivers with practical tools, education, and support matters. "Brushing the Teeth of Others" is a training video that shows practical ways to make brushing someone else's teeth easier, safer, and more comfortable while supporting dignity and better oral health. Perfect for trainers teaching caregivers who support people with disabilities. Watch the video [here](#). You can also find more resources on the Pathways to Oral Health project webpage [here](#) as well as on our [Dental Care Resource Library page](#).



Fun Ideas for Children's Dental Health Month

During Children's Dental Health Month, make learning fun! Find creative ways to teach children about healthy foods and drinks while having fun! [Here](#) is a recipe book full of ideas for your children or students to make. Children are most likely to eat something they helped make. Yogurt parfaits are always a yummy hit! Berry Egg Muffins are healthy and taste good! Celery Stop Lights! Who doesn't like a fun game of Red Light Green Light, while eating celery sticks! While making these fun foods, don't forget to talk about why we should eat healthy foods. You can also make [fruit-infused water](#)! Try adding fruit to your water for that extra sweet flavor.

Want another fun idea to do with your child or in your classroom? OHK created Picture Puzzles as a fun interactive way to learn about bacteria in our mouths. Click [here](#) to download the Picture Puzzle in both English and Spanish. While looking for the pictures with your child, talk about germs in your mouth and why we should brush and floss our teeth twice a day. Here is a handout from the American Dental Association, [Healthy Habits for Healthy Smiles](#) with more activities to do with your child or students. This handout also includes a toothbrushing chart!



Caring for Your Smile Supports Your Heart

The American Heart Association and Delta Dental recognize that oral health plays an important role in overall heart health. They have created some handouts dentists can use in their dental offices to show the correlation between oral health and your heart. There are some below:

- [Daily Habits that Protect Your Mouth and Heart \(in Spanish\)](#)
- [Poster for Lobby about blood pressure and oral health \(in Spanish\)](#)
- [Oral Heart Connection \(in Spanish\)](#)
- To find more handouts and more information on heart health and oral health, [visit their website](#).

Taking care of your mouth is another meaningful way to take care of your heart because a healthy smile supports a healthy body.



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: Caring for Patients with Trauma and Stress, Thursday, February 19 from 6 - 7p.m. CST. Register [here](#). 1.0 free CE credit.
- Dental Clinic Leadership Conference co-hosted by Community Care Network of Kansas and the Health Center Association of Nebraska on 4/9-4/10 in Manhattan. Learn more [here](#).
- Save the date! The 2026 Conference on Oral Health will be Friday, November 13.



Celebrating Black History Month, we remember Dr. Robert Freeman who was the first African American dentist in the United States and the first African American to graduate from Harvard Dental School. Freeman's admission to Harvard

was a powerful act of resistance against racial barriers. His accomplishment not only marked a personal triumph but also opened doors for future generations of African American medical and dental professionals.



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



Oral Health Kansas • PO BOX 4567 • Topeka, KS 66604
785.235.6039 phone • 785.233.5564 fax • info@oralhealthkansas.org
Copyright 2026