



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 4, 2026

Volume ?, Issue ?

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**Weekly
Wednesday
Update.**



Advocacy Alert: Medicaid Dental Rates

On Monday the House Social Services Budget Committee voted to include \$6 million in state funds in the KDHE budget for a Medicaid dental rate increase. This is about half of what we asked for, but it is really good news. This incremental approach to Medicaid dental funding takes more time, but it has proven to be successful in securing new funding every year for the last four years.

Thank you to the many advocates who have provided testimony and contacted budget committee members about the need to finish the Medicaid dental rate increase. It is working!

We need your help with the next step:

1. On Monday, February 9, the full House Appropriations Committee will hear the recommendations from the House Social Services Budget Committee and vote to accept or reject them. This year remains a tight budget year, so we need to help Appropriations Committee members see the urgency of this funding.

Representative	County	District	Email
John Alcala	Shawnee	57	John.Alcala@house.ks.gov
Mike Amyx	Douglas	45	Mike.Amyx@house.ks.gov
Avery Anderson	Harvey	72	Avery.Anderson@house.ks.gov
Barbara Ballard, Ranking Minority	Douglas	44	Barbara.Ballard@house.ks.gov
David Buehler	Leavenworth	40	David.Buehler@house.ks.gov
Will Carpenter	Butler	75	Will.Carpenter@house.ks.gov
Pam Curtis	Wyandotte	32	Pam.Curtis@house.ks.gov
Susan Estes	Sedgwick	87	Susan.Estes@house.ks.gov
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Henry Helgersen	Sedgwick	83	Henry.Helgersen@house.ks.gov
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Adam Turk	Johnson	117	Adam.Turk@house.ks.gov
Barb Wasinger	Ellis	111	Barb.Wasinger@house.ks.gov
Troy Waymaster, Chair	Russell	109	Troy.Waymaster@house.ks.gov
Kristey Williams, Vice Chair	Butler	77	Kristey.Williams@house.ks.gov

2. Share this alert with as many of your colleagues as you can. We need to ensure the House Appropriations Committee members know how many Kansans, providers, and small business owners are counting on them to finish the job of strengthening the Medicaid dental provider network.

Resources:

- [These talking points](#) about the rate increase provide background on the issues around the rate increase. Feel free to pick and choose what you may want include in your own message to legislators.
- Share this [one-page overview](#) with legislators to help explain the need for the rate increase.
- Additional information is available on our Medicaid dental rate increase [advocacy website](#), including a list of the organizations and individuals who have joined the [advocacy coalition](#).
- Contact Tanya Dorf Brunner (tdorf@oralhealthkansas.org) or MaryAnne Lynch Small (mlynchsmall@oralhealthkansas.org) with any questions.

Thank you for your partnership and your advocacy. We have a big job to do, and together we can get it done!



SB 333 Fluoride Ban Update

[SB 333](#), a bill to ban community water fluoridation in Kansas, was introduced on January 15. This bill would end water fluoridation for the nearly two-thirds of Kansans who currently have access to optimally fluoridated water. Sen. Mike Thompson, who chairs the Senate Federal and State Affairs Committee, introduced the bill.

Rumors that a hearing on the bill have subsided in the wake of significant opposition. We are hopeful the bill will not move forward, but it will remain alive until the end of the session this year.

The Kansas Dental Association and Oral Health Kansas partnered on [talking points](#) about community water fluoridation. We also have information available on the website www.fluoridekansas.org.

As we wait to see whether the bill will receive a hearing, there are three things you can do:

Use [this form](#) to send an email to every member of the Senate Federal and State Affairs Committee. A sample message is available in the form, but you can edit as much as you like.

Consider whether you would like to provide testimony in opposition to the bill. If we find out about a hearing, we likely will have little time to prepare, so planning ahead for testimony will ensure we are ready. It would be ideal to share a mountain of written testimony to demonstrate how many Kansans are opposed to restricting access to optimally fluoridated water.



Kansas Mission of Mercy Provides Dental Care to Those in Need

The Kansas Mission of Mercy was held last weekend on Friday, January 30 and Saturday, January 31 in Manhattan, Kansas. With about 700 volunteers, over 600 people received the dental care they needed despite the windy chilly weather. Oral Health Kansas staff assisted with exit surveys and heard from patients how much they appreciated the care they were given.

A big round of applause for all the volunteers and the Kansas Dental Charitable Foundation for making this event happen every year! The hard work that goes into it clearly shows.



Children's Dental Health Month Kicks Off!

February is Children's Dental Health Month and [Oral Health Kansas staff](#) wanted to join in on the fun by changing their staff pictures to a childhood picture and sharing their smiles. Did you know teaching children about oral health at a young age can help set them up for healthy habits that last into adulthood? What can you start doing? Set up a dental appointment for your child when the first tooth erupts or by the age of 1.



This will assist your child to know what a dental visit

entails, what a dentist and dental hygienist provider does at an appointment and helps ease into having someone look into their mouth besides a parent. "I took Braxxton to his first dental appointment at the age of 1. I really believe this has helped him be comfortable during his dental visits and he is now 4 years old," OHK staff member Sonia Olmos shares her experience.

Our Super Smiles For Your Child webpage has resources to help have a [Dynamite Dental Visit](#). You will find sample videos to show your child what a dental visit may look like. Of course, every dental office is different so please ask questions when setting up your child's appointment.

Kansas Has Come So Far on Adult Dental Care

Over the past four years, Kansas has made historic progress in improving dental care for adults covered by Medicaid. These investments are changing lives, strengthening communities, and rebuilding a dental provider network that has been shrinking for years.



Here's what the Kansas Legislature has already accomplished:

- 2022: Established restorative dental care for adults
- 2023: Added denture coverage for adults
- 2024: Invested in preventive dental care for adults
- 2025: \$4 million allocated for a dental rate increase to strengthen the provider network

Because of these investments, children and adults with Medicaid now have nearly comprehensive dental coverage. That is a huge milestone for Kansas.

But coverage only matters if people can actually find a dentist. Continue to read this blog on the Pathways to Oral Health Project [website](#).



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](#).
- Save the date! The 2026 Conference on Oral Health will be Friday, November 13.



On January 30, 2026, Kansas Governor Laura Kelly signed a proclamation declaring February is Children's Dental Health Month in Kansas. Oral

Health Kansas staff, board and Shawnee County Oral Health Coalition members attended the signing.



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!

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