

## 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 7, 2024

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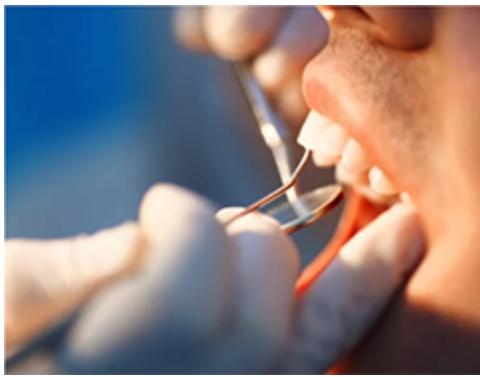
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**Weekly  
Wednesday  
Update.**

## The Push for Basic Preventive Dental Care for Adults is Next Week

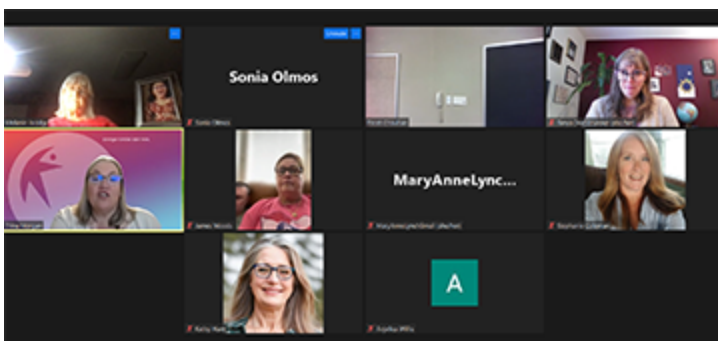
Next week is our chance to make the case for covering preventive dental care for adults in Medicaid. Both the House and Senate budget committees will hold hearings on the KDHE budget next week.



Over 20 statewide and local organizations are supporting Oral Health Kansas' advocacy this year for the Kansas Medicaid program to cover basic preventive dental care for adults. Since July 2022, adults enrolled in Medicaid in Kansas have had coverage for fillings, crowns, and gum disease care, but the care remains out of reach for many, in large part because coverage for basic preventive dental care – exams, x-rays, and cleanings – can be challenging to

access. These services are not included in the Medicaid dental program for adults, and while they can be accessed through the managed care organizations, many providers and consumers find it confusing to determine how. People must receive this basic preventive dental care before they can get restorative care like fillings. When it is hard to understand how the most essential and basic dental care is covered, providers are reluctant to care for adults and adults are less likely to receive it.

Next week we will be asking the House and Senate budget committees to commit \$4.8 million to cover basic preventive dental care for adults in Medicaid. **Testimony for the House Social Services Budget Committee will be Monday, February 12, and testimony for the Senate Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Services will be Thursday, February 15.** If you are interested in providing testimony about the importance of investing in basic preventive dental care for adults, please contact Oral Health Kansas at [info@oralhealthkansas.org](mailto:info@oralhealthkansas.org). You also can **add your organization's name to the growing list of supporters of this policy change by filling out [this form](#)**. More information, including a fact sheet and talking points, is on our [basic preventive dental care advocacy webpage](#).



## Lived Experience Advisory Group Presents to Dental Students During DEI Week

This week, Oral Health Kansas staff and Lived Experience Advisory Group members

presented to UMKC School of Dentistry students during Diversity, Equity and Inclusion week. The students were eager to learn strategies to serve people with disabilities to incorporate into their professions when they graduate. The presentation was a powerful one as four Lived Experience members shared their personal stories of their adult children with disabilities and family members' barriers in finding adequate dental care. They each shared what dental

professionals can do to help make dental visits more comfortable and person centered including using [My Dental Passport](#).



## Governor Proclaims Children's Dental Health Month

Governor Kelly has proclaimed February 2024 as Children's Dental Health Month. We are grateful for the recognition of the importance of children's oral health. Teaching healthy habits at an early age can help prevent issues later on down the road. And we want our children to be healthy!

At what age should your child visit the dentist? You should schedule a visit after the first six months or when the first tooth erupts. Starting early will help your child understand how important it is to have a healthy mouth. [Watch](#) the Sesame Street Muppets talk about a first dental visit. This [episode](#) also shows the Muppets visiting the dentist and it may help your

child see what happens during a dental visit.

Oral Health Kansas has a [Tip and Trick one pager](#) with information that may be helpful in setting up a dental visit. If you need help finding a dentist, visit our [website](#). Check your insurance card to see what health insurance company you have and go to their website or call the number on your card.



## Interstate Compact Bill Advances

This week the House Health and Human Services Committee passed HB 2453, the Dentist and Dental Hygienist Interstate Compact Bill. This bill will enable Kansas to join an interstate compact that will make it easier for dentists and dental hygienists to get licensed in the state if they are

licensed in another state that is part of the interstate compact.

The [dental interstate compact](#) is the result of a collaboration between the Council of State Governments, American Dental Association, and American Dental Hygienists' Association. This compact will create reciprocity among participant states and reduce the barriers to license portability. It will be especially helpful for dental professionals who are part of military families that move into Kansas. The compact will go into effect when seven states adopt legislation supporting it. So far four states have passed legislation, and several others, including Kansas, are considering it.

Oral Health Kansas joined with other advocates in Kansas to support this bill. The bill now will go to the full House of Representatives for consideration. Our testimony on this bill, and all testimony from 2024 is available on our [website](#).



## Oral Health Disparities in Black Children

This month is Black History Month as well as National Children's Dental Health Month. This is an opportunity to shine light on the oral health of Black children. Oral health is a critical aspect of overall health for people of all ages, including Black children. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention states the greatest disparity of children with tooth decay is seen in African Americans, and periodontal disease is greater in African Americans than almost all other racial groups. There are several factors that can influence their oral health, and addressing these factors is essential for promoting good dental hygiene and preventing oral health issues.

Some considerations include:

- Limited access to dental care can be a challenge for some communities, including those with predominantly Black populations. Barriers such as lack of insurance, transportation issues, or shortage of dental professionals in certain areas may contribute to difficulties in receiving regular dental check-ups and treatments.
- Socioeconomic status can impact access to healthy food choices and resources. Limited access to nutritious foods can contribute to poor oral health. Additionally, families with lower incomes may face challenges in affording dental care, including preventive measures like fluoride treatments or sealants.

What can we do to help? Education and awareness to families about the importance of oral hygiene, proper nutrition, and regular dental check-ups are crucial. Efforts between dentist



and healthcare providers to promote good oral hygiene helps create a supportive environment for families.



## 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:** Reducing Consumption of Added Sugars, February 14 at 12:00pm CST. Register [here](#).
- **Webinar:** The Critical Role of Black Dental Providers, February 22 from 12-1pm CST. Register [here](#).
- **Webinar:** Community and Population Health Projects, Wednesday, February 28 from 6â€”7 p.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.



Oral Health Kansas' Executive Director was invited to be the featured speaker at the Arc of Douglas County's Annual Meeting this week. She shared updates

about Medicaid adult dental services, our current advocacy to cover preventive care, and many of the



Sean Swindler, Board Chair for Arc

resources Oral Health Kansas has for dental care for people with disabilities including the Dental Passport. We enjoy visiting with organizations like the Arc and appreciated the invitation to be a part of the meeting.



## 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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