



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](#).

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

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Legislative Activity Heats Up

Informational briefings have dominated the 2023 Kansas Legislative Session so far, but this week activity on the state budget and on bills began to heat up.

Medicaid Dental Benefits

This week Oral Health Kansas and many of our partners

are making the case to the House Social Services Budget Committee and Senate Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Services to extend Medicaid adult dental coverage to include dentures. Adding this service to Medicaid will ensure thousands of Kansas adults who are missing or don't have any teeth can get dentures and partials. They will be able to eat healthy foods, control chronic diseases like diabetes, and have a smile that helps them get and keep jobs. The benefit will cost \$1.7 million, and if approved by the Legislature could go into effect as early as July 1, 2023. Learn more about this advocacy effort on our [Medicaid denture advocacy webpage](#) and contact us at info@oralhealthkansas.org for more information.

Dolly Parton Imagination Library

Oral Health Kansas joined in support of a [bill](#) that would help the Kansas Children's Cabinet expand the [Dolly Parton Imagination Library](#) to every county in the state. The Dolly Parton program enables children from birth to age five to receive one free book every month. We support partners in making referrals to the Dolly Parton Imagination Library through the [Brush Book Bed program](#). We are excited to support this opportunity to keep expanding access to books for Kansas' youngest residents.

Get the Lead Out

We have been partnering with environmental and school organizations on a new bill that would help ensure kids are not exposed to lead in the drinking water in schools. While lead in drinking water is extremely rare, Oral Health Kansas and our partners in the [Thirsty for Health project](#) have been looking at a new bill called the [Get the Lead Out of School Drinking Water Act](#). Through Thirsty for Health we are encouraging schools to install filtered water bottle filling stations, and this bill would work best if filtered filling stations become the norm in Kansas.

Tax Issues

Yesterday House Minority Leader Vic Miller testified in support of Governor Kelly's proposal to accelerate the end of the state sales tax on food and proposed also eliminating sales tax on hygiene products including toothpaste, toothbrushes, floss, and mouth rinse. He said the premise of the bill is, "Tax relief should be extended to those from who it would benefit the most and for items that contribute to our improved hygiene." He cited Oral Health Kansas testimony on this issue in a previous hearing as evidence of the importance of oral health to overall health and the value of eliminating barriers to oral hygiene products.

If you are interested in learning more about the issues and bills mentioned above or how you can get involved, contact us at info@oralhealthkansas.org. Visit our advocacy webpage to see our [advocacy toolkit](#).



2023 Oral Health Report Card Released

Oral Health Kansas released its third report comparing Kansas' oral health grade to the nation's performance. The Kansas Oral Health Report Card shows that our state is doing many things right, but that we have a long way to go to ensure that all Kansans are able to maintain their oral health. For the third year in a row, Kansas received a grade of C on a series of indicators, but the overall score improved from 1.93 to 2.4. This means that when it comes to dental care in Kansas, we are on the right track, but there is much room for improvement.

Areas of improvement relative to the national averages include the following indicators:

- Percentage of children ages 3-5 enrolled in Medicaid who received preventive dental care visit
- Percentage of third graders that have dental sealants on permanent molars
- Percentage of pregnant people who had their teeth cleaned during their pregnancy

Click [here](#) to read an introduction for the 2023 Oral Health Report Card and [here](#) to view the report card.



Oral Health Kansas Heads to Western Kansas

Oral Health Kansas continues to be on the road in Kansas. Last week, Kathy Hunt, OHK Dental Program Director, spent a frigid morning (-24 wind chill) morning at the Rawlins County Dental Clinic (RCDC) mobile van seeing Head Start children in Goodland and having great conversations about barriers to care with RCDC and Head Start staff. This is such a great service for increasing access in this rural area. Much of western Kansas is considered a dental desert where only 39% (See the [Kansas Oral Health Report Card](#)) of oral health needs are being met. This makes prevention of oral disease even more important. She also provided an oral health training for staff at the Hoxie Medical Clinic and the county health departments in Sheridan, Graham, Thomas, and Cheyenne. We'll be providing similar training across the state over the coming year. This training in made possible through funding from the KDHE Bureau of Oral Health. The goal is to help medical providers integrate oral health into their well-child visits so that young children receive fluoride varnish and families

understand the importance of a healthy mouth for good overall health, especially in areas where there are dental workforce shortages. For more information please contact Kathy at khunt@oralhealthkansas.org.

Visit our [website](#) for more consumer resources to share with families.



KMOM Volunteer Registration Opens

The Kansas Mission of Mercy (KMOM) has opened up registration for volunteers! The event will take place on March 24 and 25 in Topeka at the Stormont Vail Event Center. This year is the 20th anniversary of the KMOM events and there will also be celebratory events. Register [here](#) to volunteer!



KDHE's Bureau of Oral Health Newsletter

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment Bureau of Oral Health has released their winter newsletter. Find information on what the Bureau is doing around the state including dental screenings in schools. Click [here](#) to read the newsletter.



Kansas Health Institute Introduces Bring It Series

The Kansas Health Institute is offering a series of five virtual sessions over three weeks, from February 14 to February 28, 2023. All events are scheduled from 12:00 P.M. to 1:00 P.M. CST.

KHI is offering continuing education credits for the following professionals – physicians, APRNs, RNs and social workers.

Other participants may request a certificate of attendance. Instructions to receive credit or a

certificate will be provided at the event

KHI policy experts will be on hand to discuss the following topics:

- Tuesday, February 14 - Who's Covered? A Snapshot of Health Insurance and the Uninsured
- Thursday, February 16 - Youth Suicide Rates in Kansas
- Tuesday, February 21 - Our Aging Population: Meeting the Needs of Kansas Seniors
- Thursday, February 23 - Understanding the Behavioral Health Workforce in Kansas
- Tuesday, February 28 - Marijuana and the Workplace

You can register for these interesting topics [here](#)!



Upcoming Events

- **Sign & Share Families USA's Petition [Medicaid Should Cover our Whole Bodies: Mouths Included!](#)**
- **Kansas Public Health Association, Take 20!** How to be a Public Health Advocate in Kansas with Sonja Armbruster. Thursday, February 16 at 12:00pm CST. Register [here](#).
- **Class:** Do you support breastfeeding families? Breastfeeding 101 Basics Class February 16, 8:30m-12pm CST. Register [here](#).
- **Missouri Oral Health Policy Conference**, March 2 and 3. Learn more [here](#).
- **Kansas Mission of Mercy**, March 24 and 25 in Topeka. Click [here](#) for more information.
- **2023 National Oral Health Conference**, April 17 - 19, 2023. Click [here](#) to register.



Dr. Preddis Sullivan is OHK's 2023 President and also is the Dental Director for Delta Dental of Kansas. We are honored to not only have him on our board, but also to celebrate during Black History Month that he is the first dentist and first African American President in OHK history.





Sugary Drink Display

We have Adult and Children's Sugary Drink Displays available for reservations. 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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