

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](#).

March 13, 2024

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Legislative Update: Interstate Compact & Medicaid Expansion

The Kansas Legislature is in its 10th week and has just this week and next for committees to consider bills. During the week of March 25, both the House and Senate will debate bills committees have passed, and then conference committees and more full House and Senate debate will continue during the week of April 1. Friday, April 5 is “First Adjournment,” which is the final day of the regular legislative session.

This week the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee will hold a hearing on [HB 2453](#), which is the bill that would enact the [Dentist and Dental Hygienist Compact](#) in Kansas. The House passed the bill unanimously three weeks ago. Five states have enacted the Compact so far, and if seven states enact it, it would be able to go into effect. Virginia’s governor just signed legislation approving the compact this week. That state joins Oregon, Iowa, Michigan, and Tennessee in approving legislation. Oral Health Kansas will provide testimony in support of the bill. You can find that testimony and all of our testimony this year on our [website](#).

The House and Senate have announced they have scheduled Medicaid expansion hearings on Wednesday, March 20. Oral Health Kansas has provided [written testimony](#) in support of expansion. [Alliance for a Healthy Kansas](#) is urging stakeholders to be in the Capitol that day to show support for Medicaid expansion. They will provide lunch to those who attend on the 20th. Exact times and locations are still to be announced, but [attendees can RSVP on their website](#) to get more details and be notified when the final schedule is released.

The tentative meeting schedule follows:

■ **10:30am (subject to change)**

Joint Hearing of the Senate Ways & Means Committee and the Senate Public Health & Welfare Committee
Chaired by Senator Carolyn McGinn
Location: Old Supreme Court Room, 346-S

■ **Lunch provided for attendees - location TBA**

■ **1:30pm (subject to change)**

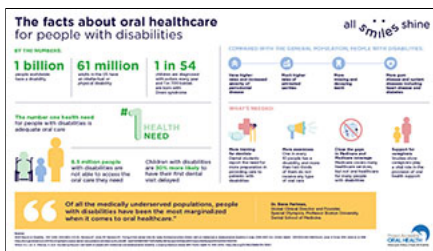
Hearing of the House Health & Human Services Committee
Chaired by Representative Brenda Landwehr
Location: Committee room 112-N



Investing in Oral Health

Dental care impacts more than just one’s mouth. It impacts your overall health and can affect your daily life. The effects of poor oral health extend beyond personal well-being and can have significant implications such as workplace productivity. Employees experiencing dental pain or discomfort may be less focused, more irritable, and prone to absenteeism. Furthermore, untreated oral health issues can result in decreased job satisfaction and reduced morale among employees.

Executive Director, Tanya Dorf Brunner, shared an article in the March 2024 issue of [TK Business Magazine](#), how important it is for companies to provide preventive dental care to their employees. Employees who have access to dental coverage prioritize their oral health and maintain their health. As the link between oral health and overall well-being becomes more evident, investing in oral health is not just a sound business decision but also a strategic imperative for organizations committed to sustaining growth and success in the long term.



Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month

It is Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month! First observed in 1987, March is dedicated to raising awareness, promoting inclusion, and advocating for the rights and well-being of individuals with developmental disabilities.

A ‘developmental disability’ refers to a group of long-lasting conditions that affects how a person’s body, learning abilities, language skills, or behavior develops. These challenges usually start before a person enters adulthood and can make it harder to do everyday tasks, particularly in a world often not designed to make aspects of life as accessible as possible for all.¹

In the US, individuals with developmental disabilities often face worse oral health, including a higher risk of untreated cavities and gum disease than their counterparts without disabilities. This is linked to the number of barriers to receiving oral healthcare, resulting in adequate oral healthcare being the number 1 unmet health need for people with disabilities in the country.²

Recognizing the need for change in the dental field, [Oral Health Kansas](#) established three important teams; Pathway to Oral Health, the Lived Experience Advisory Group, and the Sedation Dental Care Task Force. By bringing together a diverse group of professionals and community members from across the state and beyond, we believe we can work together to improve the oral health of Kansans with developmental disabilities.

We are looking forward to highlighting our resources, successes, and ongoing work to improve oral health and healthcare for people with developmental disabilities throughout the month of March and beyond.

- 1. <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/developmentaldisabilities/facts.html#:~:text=Developmental%20disabilities%20are%20a%20group,last%20thr>
- 2. <https://paoh.org/resources/#info-graphic>

March is National Nutrition Month

National Nutrition Month is dedicated to raising awareness about the importance of making informed food choices and developing healthy eating habits. Creating healthy habits early can help families promote positive eating behaviors. Head Start Early Childhood



Learning and Knowledge Center has several resources on their website to help with ideas for nutritious meals. [Cooks Corner: Recipes for Healthy Snacks](#), provides fun recipes for families and easy enough, your child can help you.

Drinking water throughout the day instead of juice or sodas not only keeps you hydrated but also eliminates the chances of acid attacks, which cause cavities. Sipping on sugary drinks all day causes acid attacks when the bacteria in your mouth comes into contact with sugars in your mouth. Mealtime is a chance to drink beverages other than water because the food helps the sugary drink stay off of your teeth.

Another way to eat healthier, is to eat a limited amount of foods with sugar and starches and serve them at meal times instead of as a snack. Choose foods high in fiber, such as whole grains, legumes, fruits, and vegetables. Fiber aids digestion, helps maintain a healthy weight, and supports heart health.

Our website has many more resources to help you find ways to choose healthier snacks and beverages. [Check it out!](#) Our [Sugary Drink Display](#) is a traveling display that shows how much sugar is in each beverage. This is a fun and interactive way to show families what's really in their drink!



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](#).
- Interhab Advocacy Day, March 14. Click [here](#) for more information.
- **Webinar:** The Future Oral Health Workforce Project: Oral Health Equity Through Workforce

Design, March 14, 1-2:30pm CST. Click [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 at the Kansas State Olathe Campus, 22201 W Innovation Dr., Olathe, KS.

If you would like to add your event to this list, email info@oralhealthkansas.org.



At the 2023 Conference on Oral Health, Shawn Oprisiu, RDH and Dental Champions Alumni, received the 2023 Outstanding Dental Hygienist Award. Shawn has made great strides to help improve the oral health of her community. Her hard work and dedication to alternative care models of dentistry is creating opportunities for children to receive oral health care at Swope Health.



If you know someone who has a story like Shawn, nominate them for the Excellence in Oral Health Award. There are several categories to pick from. Winners will be honored during the 2024 Conference on Oral Health. Find out more information by visiting our

<https://www.oralhealthkansas.org/AwardWinners.htmlwebsite>.



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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