

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](#).

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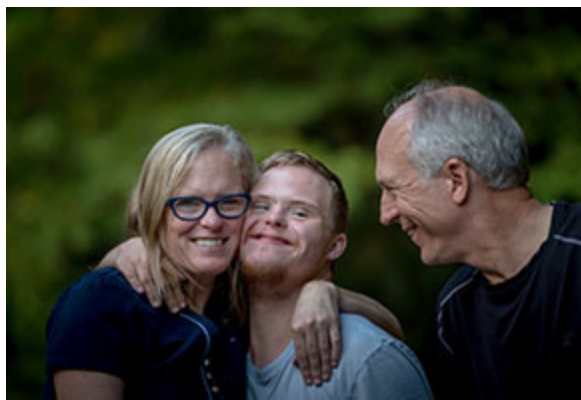


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**Weekly
Wednesday
Update.**

March is Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month!

Last week, we highlighted oral health challenges faced by individuals with developmental disabilities. Recognizing the need for change, Oral Health Kansas is convening stakeholders to design ways to use consumer and provider experience to improve access to dental care.

Our Pathways to Oral Health team is dedicated to improving oral health and oral healthcare access for Kansans with disabilities through advocacy, awareness and education. Over the



past five years this team has worked together to develop tools like My Dental Care Passport and a Project ECHO provider training series. The Pathways team's understands that the oral health challenges faced by people with disabilities do not have a simple, singular solution, and we continue to develop additional educational and policy approaches to improving access to care. Our team members come together from the disability

community, dental provider workforce, Kansas Medicaid MCOs and more to take on this challenge!

Pathways to Oral Health Highlights:

My Dental Care Passport

Drawing inspiration from her son's Medical Passport, Pathways to Oral Health team member, Tami Allen, was integral in the creation of My Dental Care Passport. Now in its second iteration, My Dental Care Passport is a tool designed to improve the dental office visit for people with disabilities by letting individuals and their families/caregivers voice their specific needs. Sharing important information, for example, how a person likes to communicate, what they liked in past dentist visits, and what parts of the appointment might be hard for them, helps break down communication barriers and allows the dental team to make changes to the dental office and appointment plan before the person even arrives. This helps make the visit to the dentist better for everyone. My Dental Care Passport is endorsed for use by the KanCare Managed Care Organizations and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment.

My Dental Care Passport (English and Spanish) and Passport Help Sheets for users and dental teams are available at <https://www.oralhealthkansas.org/DentalPassport.html>.

Project ECHO

Dental teams often feel they lack the training and support to best provide dental care for individuals with disabilities. In the Fall of 2023, the Pathways to Oral Health team collaborated with Project ECHO at Kansas University to deliver a five-session education series for dental teams and care coordinators. In these interactive sessions, experts from across the US provided participants with up-to-date knowledge and strategies to help build confidence in serving people with disabilities. We hope to continue to make this critical education available to all dental teams and care coordinators across the state.



Conference on Oral Health Sponsorship Opportunities

The Conference on Oral Health is Friday, November 8 at the Kansas State University Olathe Campus, **22201 W.**

Innovation Dr. in Olathe. There are many sponsorship opportunities available for you, as well as exhibitor spots! If you can't make it that day, we're offering a chance for you to put materials in the conference bags as well. **Sign up by October 25.** Click [here](#) to view sponsorship and exhibitor opportunities.



Medicaid Expansion Hearings at the Capitol

Today committees in the House and Senate are holding hearings on Medicaid expansion for the first time in over four years.

[Alliance for a Healthy Kansas](#) is leading the statewide advocacy efforts to expand the Medicaid program. Oral Health Kansas supports Medicaid expansion and submitted [testimony](#) detailing our support. Yesterday Alliance for a Healthy Kansas delivered all of the testimony in support of expansion to the Capitol. 463 organizations and individuals submitted written testimony in

favor of expansion. (Photo courtesy of Alliance for a Healthy Kansas.)

Over 140,000 working adults would gain access to health and dental insurance if legislators adopt Medicaid expansion. This is the population that works in the service industry and in minimum or low-wage jobs, and they are uninsured. Research from other states shows that states save money when they expand Medicaid because they spend less on incarceration and other services. The federal government pays 90% of the cost of Medicaid coverage for this population.

Oral Health Kansas is proud to support Medicaid expansion and to have our testimony included in the advocacy today. Proponents who provided verbal testimony today include hospitals, individuals, physicians, and legislators from North Carolina who recently expanded their Medicaid program.

Alliance for a Healthy Kansas is encouraging Medicaid expansion to contact members of the Kansas House and Senate to ask for an expansion debate on the floor. **Learn more and take action through this [link](#).**



Dental Issues Move Forward in the Legislature

This is the last full week of committee hearings in the Legislature as they work toward passing bills on the floor of the House and Senate and finalizing the state budget. Two big issues we are advocating for made progress this week.

Today the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee passed the Dental and Dental Hygienist Compact bill, [HB 2453](#). This bill will enable Kansas to join the new [interstate compact for dentist and dental hygienist licensure](#), which will make it easier for dental professionals to become licensed when they move from one state in the compact to another. Seven states must pass legislation in order for the compact to go into effect. Five states have passed the bill, and Kansas is one of [twelve states with pending legislation](#). The Kansas House of Representatives passed the bill on a vote of 119-0, and the next step is for the full Kansas Senate to consider it. Oral Health Kansas testified in favor of the compact bill, and [our testimony](#) is available on our website.

Funding to cover [basic preventive dental care in Medicaid](#) for adults will be considered in a House-Senate budget conference committee that will begin meeting in a few days. If the legislature approves the \$4.8 million needed to cover preventive care, all Kansas adults enrolled in Medicaid would have access to exams, cleanings, and x-rays beginning July 1, 2024. We are leading the advocacy to cover these benefits and are following the legislative process closely. Contact us at info@oralhealthkansas.org if you have any questions.

OHK is an Official Member of the NCIT

Oral Health Kansas, Inc. is proud to have become one of the first official members of the National Collaborative for Infants & Toddlers (NCIT) when they recently launched a membership drive. The NCIT is an education and advocacy movement committed to ensuring that every child prenatal to three and their families have what they need to thrive. As members, we are committed to advancing promising prenatal-to-three policies to create and expand systems of support for families reaching every parent and child at or before birth. We



know that when we support babies in their earliest years, they grow into healthy kids who are confident, empathetic, and ready for school and life and our communities, workforce, and economy become stronger and more productive. Learn more about NCIT here: <https://www.ncit.org/>

But we can't do it alone. You too can join the NCIT national network of advocates working to ensure babies and toddlers are on track for success in school and life by age three. Are you ready to make a difference in lives of expectant parents, infants and toddlers? The National Collaborative for Infant & Toddlers is part of a movement passing public policies that help all infants, toddlers, and families thrive. But to be most effective we need you and your voice! You can be a part of our community by responding to action alerts by email, volunteering on campaigns in your local area, or anyway in between. And NCIT helps provide all the connections, resources and support you need! Take action today and make a difference in the lives of babies and toddlers!

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."



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](#).
- Alliance for a Healthy Kansas monthly meetings, [Events | Alliance for a Healthy Kansas 2022 \(expandkancare.com\)](#).
- **Webinar: 2024 County Health Rankings and Roadmaps**, March 21, 1:30-2:30 p.m. Register [here](#).
- **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.



In 2015, Teresa Schwab was awarded the Outstanding Dental Champion Award. She launched the Dental Champions Leadership Program in 2005. She also was the person entrusted to be the first Oral Health Kansas Executive Director, and she led the organization through its first five years. During that time, she led the organization in advocacy efforts to establish the Extended Care Permit for dental hygienists. She also helped advocate for the funds to establish the state's only Advanced Education in General Dentistry program and then served on the planning team to start the program.



For accomplishments such as Teresa's we honor Kansans with the Excellence in Oral Health Awards at the annual Conference on Oral Health. If you know someone who should be honored as well, simply fill out the [short awards nomination on our website](#).



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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