



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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**Weekly
Wednesday
Update.**

Legislature Wraps Up Main Session

Last Thursday night/Friday morning the Kansas Legislature reached “First Adjournment.” This is the end of the main part of the legislative session. They have concluded their committee work for the year, agreed on a budget, and passed a large number of bills. Having said that, it’s also worth noting that much work remains to be done when they return for the wrap-up



or “Veto Session” on April 26. Following are a few highlights Oral Health Kansas has been following.

Taxes: There were a few tax bills that included a sales tax exemption for hygiene products including toothbrushes and toothpaste, but those did not make it into the tax bill that passed last week. The tax bill includes accelerating the elimination of state food sales tax to January 1, 2024, as well as establishing a flat income tax rate. This bill is

headed to the Governor’s desk and there is some talk of it being vetoed. If so, legislators will have to look at the tax issues again when they return at the end of the month. It is unlikely a hygiene products tax bill that includes toothbrushes and toothpaste will be considered this year.

Public Health: A number of bills have been considered this year that would change vaccine requirements and limit public health officials’ authority in public health crises. A bill that would have curtailed KDHE’s and local health departments’ ability to respond in a public health emergency did not pass, but it may be brought back up at the end of the month.

Tobacco 21: A few years ago the federal government raised the age at which people can purchase tobacco products to 21. Kansas has now followed suit after Governor Kelly signed a Tobacco 21 bill into law this week.

Dentures: House and Senate budget negotiators agreed to include \$1.2 million in the budget to add denture coverage to the Kansas Medicaid adult dental program. This is \$500,000 short of the amount needed for full implementation, and Oral Health Kansas will keep you informed about the next steps toward implementation. This does mark the second year in a row that the Kansas Legislature invested money in Medicaid dental coverage for adults.

If you have any questions about state legislative activity, please contact us at info@oralhealthkansas.org.

Autism Awareness Month

April is Autism Awareness Month. Throughout the month, we focus on increasing the understanding and acceptance of the autism community. There is not one autism but many subtypes, most influenced by a combination of genetic and environmental factors. Because autism is a spectrum disorder, each person with autism has a distinct set of strengths and



challenges. Some may experience sensory issues that are common in people with autism and are even included in the diagnostic criteria for autism spectrum disorder.

There are several types of conditions that people with autism may have that can interfere with dental care. One is the inability to communicate needs either verbally or nonverbally. For some, it is also the inability to relate social-emotionally as in trust, approval, and interest in another person. It may be difficult to respond to questions or ask for help. Some people

with autism have repetitive speech or motions like tapping fingers, and practices. In addition, many people with autism have been known to demonstrate a sensitivity to light, sound, touch and taste. Individuals, families and caregivers have available a wide variety of toothbrushes, toothpaste flavors and textures, and flossing devices to match each person's preferences.

What are some ways to provide support in your dental office or organization to people on the autism spectrum?

How Dentists Can Adjust for the 8 Senses	
See  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide tinted glasses • Install light covers • Add adjustable lighting 	Smell  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install an air purifier • Utilize an essential oil diffuser
Hear  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide noise-cancelling headphones • Provide ear-muffs 	Movement  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide comfortable chairs and pillows
Taste  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide filtered water • Offer different choices of flavour treatments 	Balance  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure an accessible building with necessary aids
Touch  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Painless and efficient cleaning equipment • Offer weighted blankets 	Interoception  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer water and a toilet

Sensory Friendly Solutions

The website <https://www.sensoryfriendly.net/> has several ideas to help you with sensory friendly solutions.

OHK also has resources to help people with disabilities and their toothbrushing:

- [Resources for adaptive aids](#) - products that can help with toothbrushing
- [Changing it up](#) - different techniques to help with limited mobility
- We have a [webpage](#) dedicated to resources for people on the autism spectrum

At our 2022 Conference on Oral Health, we were lucky to have Co-Founder/Chief Executive Officer of Sensory Health, Ben Hudson, speak to participants on how to understand sensory processing, and practical changes providers can make. Sensory Health is an example of an organization that understands the barriers patients have in healthcare settings. They are working with providers to make sure their environments are accommodating. Check out their [website](#) to read about the work they do.



County Health Rankings Released

The [County Health Rankings](#) were released at the beginning of April. The University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute created county health rankings for communities across the nation with 34 measures that help communities understand how healthy they are.

■ To find data, you can [search by your location](#). The information is easy to navigate as it is divided up by county. One data point we searched was under “Clinical Care,” where we viewed the ratio of dentists in the state of Kansas. In 2021, there was one dentist per 1,610 people registered in Kansas. This ranged from one dentist per 0 people to one dentist per 850 people across counties in the state. This information does have limitations as indicated in the report. Dentists are classified by county, but dentists living on the edge of counties or who practice in multiple locations may see patient populations that reside in surrounding counties. This data comes from the National Provider Identifier Downloadable File, which has some limitations. Providers who transmit electronic health records are required to obtain an identification number, but very small providers may not obtain a number. While providers have the option of deactivating their identification number, some dentists included in this list may no longer be practicing or accepting new patients.



Running for Office Training Series

Kansas Appleseed Center for Law and Justice is providing free trainings to anyone who is running for elected office or appointed commissions and boards. The 2023 series - Representing Your Community: Running for Office 101, will have panelists with experience running for office discussing how

to run a campaign, the basics of budgeting, and how to confidently talk about your ideas with your community.

Below are the trainings and how to register:

Southwest Kansas

Date: Wednesday, April 26, 2023

Time: 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Location: Finney County Public Library, 605 E Walnut St., Garden City, KS

Cohosts: New Frontiers and Liberal Area Coalition for Families

Register Here: bit.ly/swks_run2023

Online

Date: Thursday, April 27th, 2023

Time: 6:00-7:00 p.m.

Location: Zoom

Register Here: bit.ly/virtual_run2023

Southeast Kansas

Date: Saturday, May 6th, 2023

Time: 10:00-12:00 p.m.

Location: Independence Historical Museum and Art Center, 123 N 8th St., Independence, KS

Cohosts: Women for Kansas

Register Here: bit.ly/sek_run2023



Save the Date

The Conference on Oral Health will be held on Friday, October 27 at the KU Edwards Camps. The event will be in person and virtual. We'll keep you updated with details.

Upcoming Events

- The WSU Community Engagement Institute 2023 Virtual Workshop Series (CST): . [*Healthy Boundaries*](#), April 12 at 11:00am.



[Self-Care](#), April 19 at 11:00am.

[Navigating Conflicts and Difficult Situations](#), April 26 at 11:00am.

- Course: An Introduction to Value-Based Care in Oral Health: Moving from Volume to Value, 1 CE. Click [here](#) for the course information.
- **Webinar:** Caring for Individuals with Disabilities, April 13 at 6pm CST. Register [here](#).
- **2023 National Oral Health Conference**, April 17 - 19. Click [here](#) to register.
- **Webinar:** Strategies for Treating Autistic Individuals, April 27 at 6pm CST. Register [here](#).



Congratulations to Deb Pochop who has been listed as one of the [50 Kansans You Should Know](#). Deb is the CEO of Rawlins County Dental Clinic and a team member of OHK's Pathway to Oral Health project. In



addition to running this rural northwest Kansas dental safety net clinic, Deb is actively involved in helping break down the barriers people with disabilities face in accessing dental care.



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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