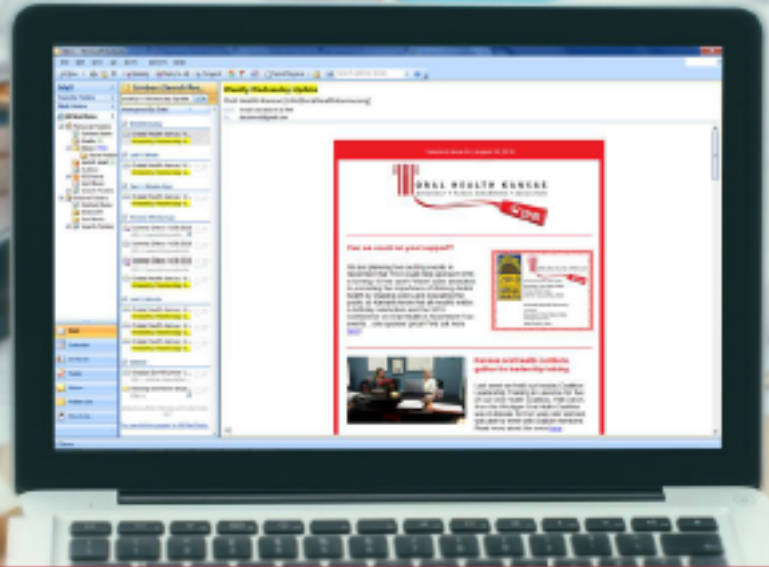




ORAL HEALTH KANSAS
ADVOCACY • PUBLIC AWARENESS • EDUCATION



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](#).

April 27, 2022

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Rep. Davids Supports Oral Health Funding

The CDC provides grants to state health departments to support oral health programs such as school screenings and community water fluoridation. Kansas is fortunate to have one of these grants, and the funding is making a big difference in the state's ability to monitor and improve the oral health status of Kansans. Unfortunately only 20 states have these grants. Oral Health Kansas is a part of a national advocacy effort to urge Congress to appropriate funding to ensure that all 50 states will be able to have CDC oral health grants.



This week members of the U.S. House of Representatives had the opportunity sign onto a letter urging passage of this CDC funding. Thank you to Rep. Sharice Davids for signing onto the letter and supporting the additional funding needed to provide funding to every state. When the funding initiative passes, Kansas will be assured we will continue to have access to the CDC oral health grant for a long time to come.



Veto Session Begins

On Monday the Kansas Legislature returned from their April break for the wrap-up or Veto Session. During this last part of the session the Legislature considers whether to try to override any vetoes of bills the governor has issued. (The Senate overrode four vetoes this week, but the House has not taken them up yet.) They also will wrap up any unfinished business and pass a final budget bill. An extra complication this year came with the news this week that the district court blocked the new Congressional map the Legislature drew up, citing gerrymandered boundaries in the Kansas City area. The Attorney General is appealing to the state Supreme Court, and it is entirely possible that the Legislature will have to draw a new map either now or toward the end of May after the court proceedings have concluded.

While the Legislature waits to see what will happen with the map, they will finish work on a number of issues, including the possible elimination of state sales tax on food. Oral Health Kansas' biggest priority this year was getting funding passed to extend Medicaid dental coverage to adults, and Governor Kelly signed the budget bill this month that secured that funding. As the Legislature works over the next few days/weeks Oral Health Kansas will continue to follow several public health issues that may or may not gain the interest of legislators. Typically the most contentious issues of the session are left to the Veto Session, and we are not engaging on these more controversial topics. We will keep readers informed as the session progresses and share any big news or advocacy opportunities.



2022 Voices for Healthy Kids Summit

This month, Jenna Gorton, Thirsty for Health team member, attended the 2022 Voices for Healthy Kids Summit in New Mexico coordinated by Voices for Healthy Kids. At this training, they learned about the value of capacity building, centering community, and how to center anti-racist tactics in our work. Ify Ike from @PinkCornrows hosted an incredible session that discussed how many well-meaning justice efforts can perpetuate racism, and how to reframe discussions of justice to center community. The session “Utilizing Peer Coaching & Collaboration to Find Solutions” hosted by Shelby Pierce and Claudia Goytia modelled many tools to skillfully guide and focus problem solving. Our team is grateful for the opportunity to get to learn and grow with other advocates to make our work more responsive to the needs of the communities we’re serving!



Get Involved to Help Veterans Access Dental Care

The [American Institute for Dental Public Health](#) (AIDPH) has issued a new report entitled “Veteran Dental Care Stimulates the Economy and Improves Overall Health.” The report from AIDPH and CareQuest Institute for Oral Health presents an economic analysis that reveals the overall health cost savings of providing access to dental care for veterans. Findings of the report show that veterans are not effectively accessing dental care. As a result, both veterans and taxpayers are supporting costly care through emergency room visits and inadequate chronic disease management. Loss of work productivity and the inability to remain employed as a result of untreated dental needs underscores the economic impact of inequitable dental care. Providing veterans with access to affordable, high-quality dental care will improve their overall health and well-being while reducing immediate and long-term costs. [Read the full AIDPH report to learn about the cost savings associated with providing veterans with dental care.](#)

Because veterans do not have access to dental coverage, their oral health can suffer. A veteran in Kansas is 17% more likely than a non-veteran to have not seen a dentist in five years. Even worse, a Kansas veteran is 76% more likely to have lost all their teeth than a non-veteran.¹

There is a bill in the U.S. Senate to expand access to dental benefits for veterans. [S 3017](#) was introduced last fall, but has yet to be scheduled for a hearing in the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee. Kansas' own Senator Jerry Moran is the ranking minority member on the Veterans Affairs Committee. Please join Oral Health Kansas in contacting him to request a hearing on the bill. **You can contact him using [this form](#).**

1 Veteran Oral Health Dashboards by CareQuest Institute for Oral Health,
<https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/carequest/viz/VeteranOralHealthDashboards/LandingPage>



County Health Rankings Released

The 2022 County Health Rankings, released on April 27 by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute (UWPHI), are available at www.countyhealthrankings.org. To support state and local health improvement efforts, the Kansas Health Institute has produced individual county profiles that include a five-year comparison of County Health Rankings data and the “drivers,” or measures with the greatest impact, on the rankings in each county. Shawnee County is ranked in the lower middle range of counties in Kansas (Lower 25%-50%) for health outcomes and health factors. Click [here](#) to plug in your county or zip code and find out where it ranks.



Upcoming Event

- **Engaging Vaccine Hesitancy Series: Immunize KS Coalition**, Wednesday, May 4 at 11:30am CST. More info and registration is on the [IKC website homepage](#).
- **Save the Date!** 16th Kansas Disability Caucus on August 10th-12th. Click [here](#) for details.
- 2022 Conference on Oral Health: Thursday, November 3

and Friday, November 4.



OHK board member Melanie Simmer-Beck was a faculty mentor to second year dental students from UMKC School of Dentistry who attended the National Oral Health Conference in Dallas, Texas. They shared results from



their research project which examined oral health professionals' perceptions about serving as COVID-19 vaccinators. Research was part of the Our Healthy Eastside KC Project funded by Jackson County. Congratulations to the students and high five to Dr. Melanie Simmer-Beck!



Sugary Drink Display Sanitation

Out of an abundance of caution, we are suspending use of the Sugary Drink Display until further notice.



During this time, hand washing and social distancing is on everyone's mind. We want everyone to have the comfort of knowing we sanitize our sugary drink displays. They are wiped down and cleaned off after they have been returned.

Follow Us



Oral Health Kansas • PO BOX 4567Topeka, KS 66604
 785.235.6039 phone • 785.233.5564 fax info@oralhealthkansas.org
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