

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](#).

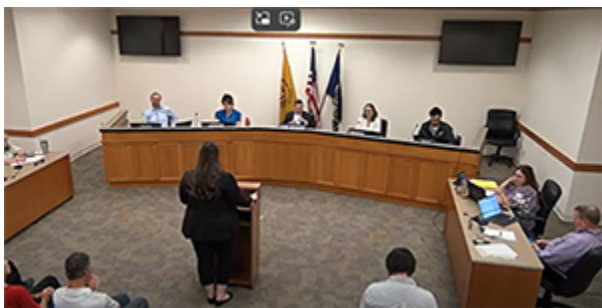
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or click here to sign up for our [Weekly Wednesday Update](#).



Abilene Restores Fluoridation

On Monday evening the Abilene City Commission voted to resume fluoridating the community's water. The city has been fluoridating since 1997, but the City Commission voted three weeks ago to

cease the practice. This week they scheduled another discussion of the issue and voted to restore fluoridation!

Oral Health Kansas [presented testimony to the City Commission](#). We were proud to support the local advocates in resuming fluoridating the water and ensuring children in Abilene will grow up with strong, healthy teeth.

Abilene is home to over 6,000 people who have had access to optimally fluoridated water for nearly 30 years. The City Commission's decision ensures Abilene residents will continue to have the health benefits of fluoride for this generation and future generations.



New KanCare MCOs Announced

Yesterday the Kansas Department of Health and Environment [announced the new KanCare \(Medicaid\) managed care organizations \(MCOs\)](#). They are United Healthcare Community Plan, Sunflower Health Plan, and Healthy Blue. United and Sunflower currently have KanCare contracts, but Healthy Blue is new. They are replacing Aetna Better Health of Kansas, which has had a managed care contract for the past six years.

The new managed care contracts with United, Sunflower, and Healthy Blue will begin January 1, 2025, and will run through December 31, 2027. Over the next six months the state and the MCOs will prepare for the transition and the new contracts.

Kansas Department of Aging and Disabilities Services Secretary Laura Howard said, "I would like to especially thank all of the members, providers, advocacy organizations and associations who provided feedback on ways to improve the KanCare program before the RFP was written." Oral Health Kansas participated in that feedback. One of our suggestions was to require the MCOs to track and publish lists of the sedation dental care providers in the state, and that requirement will go into effect in 2025. Another new feature of the MCO contracts will be that each will have a dental program director.

We are pleased to see dental care play a more prominent role in the new KanCare MCO contracts. Oral Health Kansas has worked closely with all of the MCOs, and we look forward to continuing that work and building a relationship with the newest MCO in 2025.



U.S. Senate Hearing on Dental Care Tomorrow

On Thursday, May 16 at 9am CST the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions is hosting a public hearing on the importance of affordable, accessible, and quality oral health care.

The hearing, **“Examining the Dental Care Crisis in America: How Can We Make Dental Care More Affordable and More Available?”** will be live streamed and held in-person at the Dirksen Senate Office Building, Room 430.

Myechia Minter-Jordan, MD, MBA, President and CEO, CareQuest Institute for Oral Health, will present research and data that underscores the urgent need for prevention focused medical and dental integration with a lens of equity and accessibility for all Americans. She will be joining other leaders in the field including:

- Brian Jeffrey Swann, DMD, MPH, Board of Directors, Remote Area Medical (RAM), Co-Chair, Global Oral Health Outreach, National Dental Association, Rockford, TN
- Gordon Roswell Isbell, III, DMD, MAGD, Past Trustee, Academy of General Dentistry, Gadsden, AL
- Debra Sacco, DMD, MD, District III Trustee, American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons, Chapel Hill, NC
- Lisa Simon, MD, DMD, Associate Physician, Brigham and Women’s Hospital, Member of the Faculty, Harvard Medical School, Boston, MA

Click [here](#) for Senate HELP Press Release.

Please show your support for this important conversation by participating via live stream tomorrow at 9:00am. Click [here](#) to view the hearing.



UMKC School of Dentistry Recruiting for Focus Group

The University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Dentistry is working on an initiative to advance and accelerate oral health in the Kansas City Metro area. They are inviting pregnant women, new mothers, and local

dental providers to participate in focus groups by sharing insights and experiences related to dental services.

If you are interested in participating, check out the details on the recruitment flyers below: Mothers and professionals are welcome to participate. Zoom sessions are scheduled throughout May, so seize the opportunity and sign up today!

- Link for mothers to sign up: https://redcap.link/OralHealth_Mapping_SignUP
- Link for professionals to sign up: https://redcap.link/OralHealth_Mapping_Providers



Mental Health Awareness Month

May is Mental Health Awareness Month. Mental health and oral health influence each other in many ways. Mental health conditions such as depression, anxiety, or cognitive disorders can lead to neglect of oral hygiene practices like brushing and flossing. Not maintaining your oral health may result in a higher risk of dental problems. Stress and anxiety manifest in physical ways, that can lead to teeth grinding (bruxism), which causes tooth wear, fractures, and jaw pain. Emotional factors can influence dietary habits, including increased consumption of sugary or acidic foods and beverages and contribute to tooth decay and erosion. Certain psychiatric medications used to manage mental health conditions can cause dry mouth as a side effect, increasing the risk of dental problems.

Oral health issues such as missing teeth, gum disease, or dental pain can negatively impact self-esteem and confidence, leading to social withdrawal and feelings of embarrassment or depression. Problems with oral health, such as missing teeth, cracked teeth or discolored teeth can also hinder the chances of getting a job and the confidence one feels during an interview.

Another major issue is dental pain and the discomfort from oral health problems, which can exacerbate existing mental health conditions or trigger anxiety and stress. This could also lead to overuse of pain medications.

Oral Health Kansas works to educate families on how important preventive oral health is. That includes brushing twice a day, flossing, eating healthy meals and snacks, and monitoring how much sugar is in our drinks. Find more information on our [website](#) and follow us on [social media](#) for more oral health tips!

If you or someone you know is struggling with mental health, you can find resources [here](#) for help.



Insurance Enrollment Help for People who Lost Medicaid Coverage

The Medicaid or KanCare program has finished the first year of conducting Medicaid eligibility reviews. The reviews had stopped during the pandemic, but they began again last spring. Over the past year many people have lost their Medicaid/KanCare coverage, but there is an opportunity for people who lost coverage to apply for coverage through the Affordable Care Act's Marketplace.

The federal government has extended the deadline to apply for coverage through the Marketplace from July 31, 2024, to November 30, 2024. People who qualify for this coverage would be covered on the first day of the month following plan selection. Cover Kansas Navigators are available to help with Marketplace applications and enrollments. If your [local community health center](#) (safety net clinic) does not have a Navigator who can help you apply for this coverage, call 866-826-8375 to talk to the Cover Kansas Virtual Navigator.



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](#).
- Community Care Network of Kansas and the Health Center Association of Nebraska (HCAN) are co-hosting the second annual two-day Dental Clinic Leadership Conference, June 13 - June 14. 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.



Congratulations to former board member, Lissa Staley for being recognized by the Library Journal with the 2024 Movers and Shakers award as a Community Builder.



"This is a prestigious award for libraries and we are proud Lissa has been recognized for all her work with community organizations and individuals in Topeka and Shawnee County," said Marie Pyko, Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library CEO.

During her board term with OHK, she provided her expertise on the overall health she saw in our Topeka community, as well as found ways to integrate oral health in the library and with the members. She is a true mover and shaker in the Topeka community, and she continues to support Oral Health Kansas with her endless community connections and ideas for community engagement. Congratulations!

Read more about Lissa in [the TK Magazine](#).



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!

Follow Us



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