



## 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](#).

**May 17, 2023**

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**Weekly  
Wednesday  
Update.**



## 2023 Award Nominations Are Now Open!

Each year we honor Kansans who have made an oral health impact in their community. This year is our 20th anniversary, an even more impactful year to celebrate the people who have worked hard to improve the health of the people in their community.

We are seeking nominations in the following categories:

- **Outstanding Organization Award** - An organization that is distinguished from others in excellence in promoting oral health awareness in Kansas
- **Outstanding Dental Hygienist Award** - A dental hygienist that is distinguished from others in excellence, who goes beyond the call of duty and is committed to improving the oral health of Kansans
- **Outstanding Dentist Award** - A dentist that is distinguished from others in excellence, who goes beyond the call of duty and is committed to improving the oral health of Kansans
- **Outstanding Community Leader Award** - A community leader that is distinguished from others in excellence, who goes beyond the call of duty and is committed to improving the oral health of Kansans
- **Bob Bethell Outstanding Policy Maker Award** - An outstanding policy maker that is distinguished from others in excellence, who shows support for the oral health of all Kansans
- **Outstanding Oral Health Volunteer Award** - An outstanding non-dental volunteer who demonstrates a positive difference in an organization - someone who saw a problem and got involved to find a solution
- **Ron Alexander Outstanding Dental Champion Award** - This award is designed to recognize the outstanding work a Dental Champion has done as a direct result of participating in the Dental Champions Leadership Program.

The deadline to submit nominations is Monday, September 11 by 5pm. The winners will be recognized during the 2023 Conference on Oral Health on Friday, October 27 at the [KU Edwards Campus in Overland Park, Kansas](#).

**My Dental Care Passport**

**For users:** This passport is unique to you. Please fill out all information that you think is important.

**For my dentist or healthcare provider:** This is key reading for all staff working with me. It gives important information about how I can be supported when visiting your clinic. This passport should be kept visible and used when you talk to me or have a question about me.

Please check the box that applies:  
☐ I completed this form myself ☐ I completed this form with help from someone else

This form was completed with help from:  
 Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

**ABOUT ME**

My name is:  
 (I like to be called) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Nickname if you have one: \_\_\_\_\_

I am: ☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Transgender Male ☐ Transgender Female  
☐ Variant/Non-conforming ☐ Not listed \_\_\_\_\_

My preferred pronoun is:  
☐ He ☐ She ☐ They ☐ Ze ☐ Not listed \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ No preference

## New Passport Makes Dental Appointments Easier

Oral health is essential for overall health and wellbeing. A healthy mouth and surrounding structures help us eat, drink, communicate, emote and much more. Oral diseases are also found to be linked to many other bodily conditions, such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease. However, access to high-quality dental care is not equally accessible to all. 6.5 million people with disabilities living in the United States are unable to

access the dental care they need, making it their number one unmet healthcare need.<sup>1</sup> The disabilities community faces many barriers in their oral healthcare journey, and we need to explore strategies that can make this essential healthcare service accessible for all.

My Dental Care Passport is a communication tool designed to help people with disabilities provide critical information to the dental team to help them prepare for a successful dental appointment. Sharing how they communicate, what has worked well when visiting the dentist in the past, and what parts of the appointment might be most challenging, the Dental Passport allows users and their families/caregivers to voice their individual needs. Opening this communication channel can begin to shift attitudes, improve the dental team-patient relationship, allow the dental team to make changes to the dental office environment before a person even arrives, and improve the chance of a successful visit to the dentist.

My Dental Care Passport is available in English and Spanish at <http://oralhealthkansas.org/DentalPassport.html>. Here you will also find help sheets- one for passport users and one for their dental team - filled with useful tips and tricks to get the most out of the Passport. My Dental Care Passport was created by the Pathways to Oral Health team led by Oral Health Kansas, and it is endorsed by Aetna Better Health of Kansas, United Healthcare, Sunflower Health Plan, and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment.

The new My Dental Care Passport is free and available to anyone to use. Please share it with colleagues, friends, and family members, and share any success stories by sending a message to [info@oralhealthkansas.org](mailto:info@oralhealthkansas.org). If you know of anyone who would be interested in hearing about the dental care passport, email us at [info@oralhealthkansas.org](mailto:info@oralhealthkansas.org).

1 Oregon Office on Disability and Health: <https://www.ohsu.edu/oregon-office-on-disability-and-health/oral-health-people-disabilities>



## Foster Care and Oral Health

May is National Foster Care Month and we wanted to bring attention to the importance of oral health for foster children. We recently had a Lived Experience Advisory Group Meeting and one of our group members is a foster parent. She shared her concerns that not only do foster children not always have a toothbrush or toothpaste with them, but she also has to learn how to navigate the health system to get her foster children a dentist appointment. She told us “When a foster child enters care, they must have their medical, dental, and vision examinations completed within 30 days, and it is up to the foster parent to find the providers. I live in Wichita and must travel to Newton for service. That’s the nearest dental provider I can get in within the 30 days. They are usually scheduled way too far out.”

Many children entering foster care may have experienced neglect or trauma or limited access to dental care. As a result, they may have dental problems such as tooth decay, gum disease, or other oral health issues. It's important to provide these children with timely access to dental services, including routine check-ups, cleanings, and necessary treatments. Dental professionals and caregivers should employ trauma-informed care practices, taking into account the unique needs of these children and providing a safe and supportive environment during dental visits.

We have also heard stories from foster care workers that children who aren't accustomed to having their teeth brushed, particularly ones who come from hard places, may have sensory processing issues with brushing. As part of the foster care system, it is essential to conduct dental screenings for children soon after they enter foster care. These screenings help identify any existing oral health problems and establish a baseline for ongoing dental care.

This is the first study to explore foster carers' oral health perspectives and the foster family environment within the oral health context. It highlights the unrecognized and important role that foster carers have in improving the oral health of vulnerable children." [How do foster carers manage the oral health of children in foster care? A qualitative study - Muirhead - 2017 - Community Dentistry and Oral Epidemiology - Wiley Online Library](#)



## USDA Considers Future of Chocolate Milk

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is considering a limit on flavored milk in schools. The concern centers on the amount of added sugars in children's diets. The proposal the USDA is considering would either limit chocolate and strawberry milk to being available in high schools only or require a lower amount of sugar in these flavored milks.

The issue weighs the value of providing students with the nutrition available in milk versus consuming added sugar. Eight ounces of chocolate milk can contain about six teaspoons of sugar, while the same amount of plain milk contains half that amount. A [Wall Street Journal article](#) published on May 15, 2023, includes interviews with nutritionists and school advocates, as well as USDA administrators. The USDA is required to set the standards for food and beverages served in schools.

The Wall Street Journal article notes a study of a small school district that removed chocolate milk in schools, "found that shortly after the change, just under 52% of students selected plain 1% or nonfat milk at lunch. But two years later, 72% of students took milk." If the USDA takes action, the change would go into effect for the 2025-26 school year.

If you are interested in sparking conversations about drinks with added sugars, consider borrowing Oral Health Kansas' [Sugary Drink Display](#) to share at your school, office, or library.



## 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

- Course: An Introduction to Value-Based Care in Oral Health: Moving from Volume to Value, 1 CE. Click [here](#) for the course information.
- **Webinar:** Using Oral Health Equity Data to Improve Patient Care, May 18, 3:00pm CST. Register [here](#).
- **Webinar:** Side by Side: Winning Examples of Public/Private Partnerships, May 23, 12:00pm CST. Register [here](#).
- **Webinar:** A Global Perspective on Oral Health, May 24, 12:00 PM CST. Click [here](#) to join the webinar.
- Kansas Community Health Worker Symposium, June 13, 9am-4pm in Wichita. Register [here](#).



At the Leadership Kansas (LK) Alumni Grand Reception and Leadership Summit on Thursday, April 20, Marlou Wegener was named the LK Alum of the Year. With more than 1,400 distinguished alumni and counting, it is a prestigious honor to be awarded and named Alum of the Year. Marlou was a member of the 2010 LK class and LK state



program chair in 2017. Marlou has also served on the LK board of directors and served on and chaired numerous Topeka sessions.



Leadership Kansas is a statewide program that was designed to enhance and motivate future leaders from various Kansas communities. Each year, close to 500 people are nominated to apply for the program. It is one of the oldest and most prestigious statewide leadership programs in the country.

After a thorough and thoughtful application and selection process, 40 individuals are selected to participate in the class. Leadership Kansas is dedicated to ensuring geographic, racial, occupational and gender diversity so that each class truly represents the state. Marlou was a member of Dental Champions Class I and is a former Oral Health Kansas Board member. She also continues to serve on committees and actively engage with Oral Health Kansas. We are so proud of her accomplishment!



## 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!

## Follow Us



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