



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.

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**Weekly
Wednesday
Update.**



Sponsorship and Exhibitor Opportunities for the Conference on Oral Health

The Conference on Oral Health will be held on Friday, October 27 at the KU Edwards Campus, 12600 Quivira Rd in Overland Park, Kansas. The event will be in person and virtual. If you're interested in sponsoring our event, please submit your sponsorship by October 6,

2023. There are also exhibitor opportunities! Returning exhibitors will receive a discount of 10%. This offer is not valid for sponsor packages. Please email conference.office@wichita.edu for the Promo Code. To find sponsor and exhibitor information, click [here](#) and to sign up view the information [here](#).



Veterans Need for Oral Health Care

In honor of the Memorial Holiday weekend ahead, we wanted to highlight how important access to oral health for veterans is to us all.

Veterans' access to dental care varies depending on their eligibility for benefits. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) provides dental benefits to some veterans, but the availability and extent of these benefits depends on several factors, such as service-connected disabilities, former prisoner of war status, and eligibility for VA healthcare.

The VA offers comprehensive dental care services to certain veterans, including diagnostic, preventive, and restorative treatments. However, these services are not automatically available to all veterans, and eligibility requirements apply. Veterans can check with their local VA healthcare facility or visit the VA website for information on dental benefits and how to apply.

In 2021, the American Institute of Dental Public Health (AIDPH) and CareQuest Institute for Oral Health collaborated with veteran service organizations and military partners to disseminate a 39-question survey, the 2021 Veteran Oral Health Survey, assessing self-reported oral health and other physical health outcomes among veterans nationally.

- 35.5% of rural veterans rate their dental health as “poor” compared with 28.5% of urban veterans
- More than 1/3 of rural veterans selected “other” as their dental insurance type, with the most common response being “none” or “self-pay”
- Roughly 72% of rural veterans reported routinely accessing dental care in a private practice clinic, compared with 64% of urban veterans

Increased eligibility for dental care would allow veterans to receive dental care where they are already receiving medical care. Strengthening the [Community Care Program implemented through the MISSION Act](#) can multiply care delivery location options for rural veterans who

currently lack access to a VA facility. Providers should register for this program, and reimbursement rates should remain competitive to expand and sustain this network.

Get Involved

IAIDPH will kickoff their new Veteran Oral Health Action Collaborative in a launch call on June 8. The Collaborative is an eight-month intensive program that will feature innovative presentations and hand-on applied learning in partnership with CareQuest Institute for Oral Health. Monthly sessions will feature inter-professional presenters and will build on concepts of care integration and value-based designs while advancing solutions to veteran oral health issues. Find out how you can get involved [here](#).



Honoring Excellence

OHK thinks people should be applauded for the work they do and most importantly the work around oral health. We have met with people we have come across at conferences or meetings and are amazed at the work they're doing. Honoring them at the 2023 Conference on Oral Health is the perfect time to show them how much we appreciate their hard work.

We are seeking nominations in the following categories for the Excellence in Oral Health Awards.

- **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](#).

The image shows a digital form titled "My Dental Care Passport" with a tooth icon. It includes instructions for users and healthcare providers. A section titled "Please check the box that applies:" has two options: "I completed this form myself" and "I completed this form with help from someone else". Below this is a section "This form was completed with help from:" with fields for Name, Phone, and E-mail. The "ABOUT ME" section includes "My name is:" with a note "I like to be called:" and a field for "Nickname if you have one". It also has gender options: "I am:" with checkboxes for Male, Female, Transgender Male, Transgender Female, and Variant/Non-conforming, and a "Not listed" option. The "My preferred pronoun is:" section has checkboxes for He, She, They, Ze, Not listed, and No preference.

The Impact of Mental Health on Your Oral Health

Mental health issues such as stress, anxiety, depression, or other conditions can have a direct impact on oral health. People experiencing mental health challenges may be more prone to neglecting their oral hygiene practices, which can lead to dental problems like gum disease, tooth decay, or bad breath. Some medications used to manage mental health conditions may have side effects that affect oral health. For example, medications like

antidepressants or antipsychotics may cause dry mouth (xerostomia), which reduces saliva production and increases the risk of tooth decay and gum disease. Many individuals with mental health issues, particularly anxiety disorders, may experience dental anxiety or dental phobia. The fear of dental procedures can prevent people from seeking necessary dental care, leading to untreated oral health problems.

Oral health can significantly impact an individual's self-esteem and confidence. Did you know that 48% of young adults have untagged themselves from a photo on Facebook because of their smile? According to [research from the ADA Health Policy Institute](#), one in four Kansas adults feel embarrassment about their teeth. Dental issues like missing teeth, discolored teeth, or bad breath can contribute to feelings of embarrassment or self-consciousness, potentially exacerbating mental health challenges. It also leads to lack of self-confidence when applying for employment. We are hopeful with the [additional dental services for adults KanCare \(Medicaid\)](#) now provides members, many Kansans will have the chance to feel more positive in their job search and speaking to others.

[My Dental Care Passport](#) is a new tool available through a collaboration led by Oral Health Kansas a collaborated project among Aetna Better Health of Kansas, United Healthcare, Sunflower Health Plan and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, as well as

disability and dental providers and advocates. My Dental Care Passport is designed to improve the dental office visit for people with disabilities by letting individuals and their families/caregivers voice their specific needs. The passport is not only designed for people with disabilities but can also be used by people with a mental illness who struggle with dental visits and are not sure how to explain their circumstances. 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.

The Passport is unique to an individual. It may contain personal information and descriptions of personal experiences. This information can be incredibly useful for the dentist and their team to make the dental visit as successful as possible. However, this information is not to be shared with anyone outside of the dental office, including other healthcare professionals, without the user's permission. Learn more about [My Dental Passport here](#) and start using it today.



Apply for the Federal Service Immersion Program

The 2023 American Institute of Dental Public Health Federal Service Immersion Program is a week-long experiential learning initiative from October 9 to 13, 2023, that provides dental public health professionals and students an opportunity to visit federal agencies in Washington, D.C. It is designed for individuals who want to pursue a career in policy, federal service, and/or government. The program will include in-person site visits to various agencies where participants can engage with leaders to learn about the role and operations of different federal agencies. The application deadline is May 29. Here's the link:

<https://aidph.org/education/fsi/>.



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:** 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](#).



Thien Doan is a Community Health Worker with Communities Organizing to Promote Equity (COPE) through the University of Kansas School of Medicine in Wichita. During Wellness



Wednesday at the Oaklawn Activity Center, he had the opportunity to show about thirty 4th and 5th graders the Sugary Drink Display and Acid Attack Kit demonstration during the after-school program. What a perfect moment to teach kids the importance of how much sugar is in drinks and how consuming such drinks and foods can do harm to your teeth!

If you're interested in purchasing an Acid Attack Kit or reserving a Sugar Drink Display, contact us at info@oralhealthkansas.org



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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