



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.**](#)

Men's Health Week

Not only is it Men's Health Week, but it's also National Men's Health Month. Men may not prioritize health and check ups as much as women do, including their oral health. Men are less likely to visit the dentist than women are. Having unhealthy oral health can lead to overall health issues in your body. What kind of issues should we be concerned about?



- Gum disease can lead to cardiovascular problems, such as a stroke. Men have much higher rates of gum disease than women, with about 56% of men affected versus 38% of women.
- More than 54,000 new cases of oral cancer are reported in the United States and these cancers occur almost twice as often in men than in women.
- Medicines may affect all of our mouths, not just men, causing dry mouths. Drink lots of water and chew sugar-free gum or lozenges.

It's important for men to take care of their oral health. Oral health issues can lead to problems in our overall health of our bodies. Brushing, flossing and visiting the dentist are ways to maintain your oral health. Find more tips on our [website](#).



Sign On to Support Comprehensive Dental Care

Join Oral Health Kansas in signing on to this advocacy letter from Community Catalyst. The goal is to demonstrate to Congress the widespread national support for a package of oral health policy changes. [Oral health is essential to overall health](#), with connections to many other chronic and acute

conditions. It also has deep implications for economic well-being - access to dental care can [improve employment outcomes](#), [increase earning potential](#), and lead to [overall health care savings](#). Despite these connections, dental coverage and care, especially for adults, remains largely separate from the rest of the health care system. Significant gaps in our nation's oral health workforce only compound these coverage gaps, with more than [58 million people living in areas without enough dental providers](#).

A patchwork of public and private coverage, along with the lack of an adequate oral health workforce to fully meet peoples' needs, results in dental care presenting the [greatest financial barriers](#) of any healthcare service. **Millions of people routinely face an impossible choice: forgo needed dental care or take on debt to pay for it.**

But it doesn't have to be this way. Standardizing comprehensive dental coverage for adults can go a long way to addressing our nation's oral health crisis and advancing oral health equity. And it's the right thing to do for the millions of people across the US who suffer in pain

because of unmet oral health needs. Last month, Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT) introduced the [Comprehensive Dental Reform Act of 2024](#), which would address many of these gaps by **adding adult dental care as an Essential Health Benefit, making adult dental benefits mandatory in Medicaid, adding a comprehensive dental benefit to Medicare, and adding dental therapists to the National Health Service Corps.**

View the [full sign-on letter here](#) and **[add your organization's name](#)** by **Thursday, June 13.**



Stay in Touch with Your Legislator

The legislative session may be over for the time being and while legislators are on break, this is a perfect opportunity to connect with them in their hometown. During this time, legislators are having coffee time with their constituents or town hall meetings. Find those events on their website or social media.

You are not sure how to find your legislator? Use our [Advocacy Toolkit](#) for ways on how to find your legislator, email them or call them and what to expect during a meeting. Here is a [quick 2024 legislative wrap up](#) to refresh your memory on what bills were related to oral health and health.

If you have any questions, email us at info@oralhealthkansas.org.



Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness Month

Studies suggest that there may be significant connections between oral health and the development or progression of Alzheimer's disease. Chronic inflammation from periodontal disease may contribute to systemic inflammation, which is a known risk factor for Alzheimer's disease.

Periodontitis can be characterized by bad biofilm, bad bacteria, attachment loss (when the ligament that connects the soft tissue to the bone that supports the teeth starts to degrade), increased pocket depths (think of that little probe that dentists poke you with and call out measurements), inflammation and bone loss. Bacteria and the inflammation cascade that

they cause can travel through the bloodstream to the brain. Previous lab studies have suggested that this is one mechanism influencing the cascade of events that leads to dementia, but large studies with people have not been conducted to confirm this relationship.

Gum disease (gingivitis) has been linked to a higher risk of heart disease, but studies says that the bacteria that causes gingivitis also may be connected to Alzheimer's disease. You can learn more about the relationship of alzheimer's and oral health [here](#).

If there is a correlation between alzheimer's and oral health, what do we do?

- Make sure to continue to maintain your oral health by brushing and flossing two times a day.
- Allow someone to help you brush if you are struggling or offer to help someone brush if you see them struggle.
- [Adaptive aids](#) can help with adapting toothbrushing [Changing it Up](#) can help with toothbrushing techniques.

Check out our [website](#) for more helpful resources. Visit the [Alzheimer's Association](#) for more information about Alzheimer's and oral health.



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](#).
- Hosted by Kansas Health Institute, Virtual or In Person: Understanding Access: Health Coverage for Kansas' Hispanic Communities, June 27 from 10am-1130am. 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.



We are excited to announce the Dolly Parton Imagination Library has now expanded statewide in Kansas. The program is for children birth to age 5. Once signed up, the child will receive one free



book a month. Reading 15 minutes a day helps with a child's knowledge and imagination, as well as problem solving. Why not incorporate [Brush Book Bed](#) (BBB)? BBB is a program by the American Academy of Pediatrics, to educate families with children to have healthy oral health and bedtime routines. It starts with brushing your teeth, reading a book and going to bed at the same time every night, creating a routine. Both programs are great for reading and bonding!



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!

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