



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.**](#)

Loss of a Legislative Champion

On Monday Rep. Les Mason, Chair of the House Social Services Budget Committee and House Assistant Majority Leader, [died after experiencing a brain aneurysm over the weekend](#). This was entirely unexpected and a heartbreaking loss for his family and friends, as well as everyone at the state Capitol.



Rep. Mason was instrumental over the past two years in getting funding allocated to cover dentures and preventive dental care for adults covered by Medicaid. As the Chair of the Social Services Budget Committee, he was an engaged leader, interested in learning all he could and making changes to help people access the services and supports he needed. He was keenly interested in making sure people have access to dental care, and he truly championed the new services over the last two years.

Despite having served in the Legislature for ten years, at Oral Health Kansas we felt like we were just getting to know him. We truly enjoyed his sense of humor, kindness, and dedication to services for people. We all have experienced a big loss, but we know the impact Rep. Mason had in the Capitol will live on for many years to come



OHK Visits Parsons State Hospital

Oral Health Kansas was on the road again, spending the day with staff and residents of the [Parsons State Hospital](#), a residential facility for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, located in Parsons, Kansas. Kathy Hunt, OHK Dental Program Director, was treated to a tour of the grounds, where residents proudly shared their handiwork with graphics, wood, plants, and dog biscuits. She also visited the on-site dental clinic where all residents receive regular dental care. In the afternoon, Kathy provided a hands-on learning session for the residents called "Feeling Good about Your Smile". They learned ways to keep their mouth and teeth healthy and participated in a variety of hands-on activities.

If you're interested in learning more, email Kathy at khunt@oralhealthkansas.org



Honoring Kansans for Twenty Years

In 2004, Oral Health Kansas understood how important it was to honor Kansans who work so hard to improve the oral health of their communities. That's when the Excellence in Oral Health Awards was introduced and the first award was given to the

Kansas Dental Charitable Foundation for the Kansas Mission of Mercy Project. Twenty years later, we are still honoring Kansans at the annual Conference on Oral Health.

There are several categories to choose from to nominate an individual or an organization:

- **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 23 at 5pm. Learn more on the [Excellence in Oral Health Awards webpage](#)



National Focus Group for Parents and Caregivers of Children with Special Health Care Needs and Disabilities

Family Voices and [NORC at the University of Chicago](#) are holding focus groups with parents and caregivers of children with

special health care needs and disabilities to learn more about the challenges families face when navigating dental care for their children and what helps.

The information from these focus groups will be used to improve healthcare systems and to increase awareness of parents' and caregivers' experiences with dental care. Selected focus group participants will receive a gift card for their participation. Learn more and apply here: [NORC Dental Care Focus Groups](#).



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](#).
- **BINGO Night & Medicaid Expansion Community Conversation** - June 10 at 7:00pm. It's free and will be held at the Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library. RSVP [here](#).
- 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.



Last month, Tanya Dorf Brunner marked 15 years as executive director for Oral Health Kansas. She started in 2009, and while many things have changed over the years, one thing has remained the same - she and everyone at

Oral Health Kansas have raised the profile and impact of the organization in Kansas and across the country.



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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