



## 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.](#)



## Medicaid Dental Rate Increase This Fall

The rate increase passed by the Kansas Legislature is likely be implemented this fall. The funding available for the increase this year was less than in 2025. Implementing in the fall may allow for a slightly higher increase in some of the rates. Thank you to all the dental providers who responded to the survey about the rate increase implementation. All the survey responses were sent to Kansas

Department of Health and Environment, who is managing the dental rate increase process and will

make an announcement about how and when it will go into effect. We will share more details as soon as we have them, but we wanted to keep you updated with what we have learned so far.



## Pathways Partners Plan for Continued Impact

The Pathways to Oral Health partners recently gathered for their third in-person retreat, bringing together organizations from across Kansas for a day of collaboration, strategic planning, and shared learning. Participants reflected on the many accomplishments of the past year, explored opportunities to strengthen provider recruitment and Medicaid access, and identified priorities for the future. The retreat was filled with thoughtful discussion, fresh ideas, and renewed energy as partners reaffirmed their commitment to improving oral health access for Kansans with disabilities.

The retreat also provided an opportunity for Oral Health Kansas' incoming executive director to begin connecting with many of our trusted partners as we look ahead to an exciting new chapter. Stay tuned, there's more to come as we officially welcome our new Executive Director and share what's next for Oral Health Kansas!



## Who Is the Next Outstanding Community Leader Award Winner?

In 2025, Deb Pochop, CEO for Northwest Smile Center, received the Outstanding Community Leader Award. The award is presented to 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. We are looking for nominations for 2026 Excellence in Oral Health Awards. There are several categories to choose from.

The categories are listed below:

- 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.

Submit your nominations by Friday, August 28 by 5:00pm. Click [here](#) for the nomination for the Excellence in Oral Health Award or [here](#) for the Ron Alexander Outstanding Dental Champion Award. Winners will be recognized during the Conference on Oral Health, Friday, November 13 at the KU Edwards Campus in Overland Park. We ask that you do not nominate someone who has won an award in the past to allow everyone an opportunity.

Email [info@oralhealthkansas.org](mailto:info@oralhealthkansas.org) with any questions about the award nominations.



## Celebrate Independence Day with a Healthy Smile

As you celebrate the 250th anniversary of the United States this weekend with family, friends, and festive foods, don't forget to take care of your smile. Summer favorites like barbecue, lemonade, soda, and sweet treats can increase the risk of cavities if enjoyed frequently. Choose to have sweets as desserts immediately after a meal instead of waiting to snack on sweets in between meals. Less dental decay is seen in the teeth of people who only eat sweets as desserts right after their meals. Stay hydrated by drinking fluoridated water, choose healthier snacks when possible, and brush twice a day with fluoride toothpaste. You can also chew sugar free gum to help clean away food in your teeth until you brush you are able to brush your teeth.

[View Tips and Tricks](#) on Healthy Eating and Healthy Mouths. Celebrate safely and help keep your smile healthy all summer long!

## Upcoming Events

- 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 annual conference, September 23-25 in Manhattan, Kansas. Learn more [here](#).
- Kansas Public Health Association Conference, October 5 - 6, 2026 in Manhattan. Click [here](#) for information.
- Rutgers University offering Perinatal Oral Health ECHO Series webinar. Check out the list of series [here](#).
- Save the date! The 2026 Conference on Oral Health will be Friday, November 13 at the KU Edwards Campus.



For over 10 years, Delta Dental of Kansas has sponsored our annual conference. It empowers us to think how much they believe in our work.



We are honored to recognize Delta Dental of Kansas as a Platinum Sponsor of the 2026 Conference on Oral Health. Their generous support plays a vital role in helping us move forward with confidence and momentum.



## 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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