



## 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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or click here to sign up for our [Weekly Wednesday Update](#).

## Oral Health Kansas Continues Our Commitment to Supporting People with Disabilities

Kathy Hunt, our Dental Program Director, recently represented our organization at the annual Self Advocates Coalition of Kansas (SACK) conference for adults with disabilities. She delivered an engaging presentation titled "Feeling Good about Your Smile," which was a hit among attendees. The session featured several hands-on activities designed to boost confidence and



promote oral health. Two remarkable self-advocates, Shane and Lisa, assisted with the presentation. Lisa was dressed as the Tooth Fairy and their enthusiasm brought a unique and inspiring perspective to the session, making it even more impactful.

In addition to the presentation, Kathy also managed an interactive exhibit booth. One of the highlights was a prize wheel, where participants could spin to win various goodies,

adding an extra layer of fun and excitement to the event.

Our involvement not only showcased our commitment to empowering individuals with disabilities but also provided valuable insights and enjoyable experiences for all who attended.



## Kansas Featured in National Oral Health Issue Brief

Earlier this summer [Justice in Aging](#), a national advocacy organization that fights senior poverty through the law, published an Issue Brief about how Medicaid waivers can help address oral health disparities. [Medicaid Waivers: A Vehicle to Improve Access to Oral Health and Address Disparities for](#)

[Older Adults and People with Disabilities](#) includes a case study on Kansas' experience with using Medicaid waivers to cover dental care for older adults. This experience pre-dates the current Medicaid adult dental benefit in Kansas, but it laid the groundwork for the coverage now available to all adults.

The Kansas Medicaid program has been focused on improving dental care access for adults since 2008, and the dental coverage is now nearly comprehensive. Oral Health Kansas is grateful to Justice in Aging for sharing Kansas' progress in addressing oral health disparities in our state.



## Promoting Oral Health During Disability Pride Month

Disability Pride Month, observed in July, celebrates and promotes awareness, acceptance, and appreciation of the diverse experiences of people with disabilities. Oral health is a critical yet often overlooked aspect of overall health for people with disabilities. The National Conference on Dental Care for People with Disabilities reports that for over 40 years, the number one unmet health need for people with disabilities is adequate dental care. Addressing oral health during Disability Pride Month involves understanding the unique challenges faced by individuals with disabilities:

- Thirty percent more likely to have their first childhood dental visit delayed.
- Have higher risk for dental problems.
- Less likely to receive necessary restorative and preventive care resulting in a higher level of untreated disease.

Dental offices may not be fully equipped to accommodate wheelchairs or other mobility devices. Accessible dental equipment, such as adjustable chairs, can make a significant difference. Individuals may also have various sensory issues and may find the sights, sounds, and sensations of a dental visit overwhelming. Strategies like sensory-friendly environments and clear communication can help. People with communication disabilities might find it difficult to express their needs or understand instructions. Dentists trained in alternative communication methods can provide better care and dental practices can adopt inclusive policies and make their services more accessible to people with disabilities. This includes staff training and facility upgrades.

The [My Dental Care Passport](#) was designed to improve the dental office visit for people with disabilities by letting individuals and their families/caregivers voice their specific needs. Sharing important information, for example, how a person likes to communicate, what worked well in past dentist visits, and what parts of the appointment might be hard for them. The Passport 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 **My Dental Care Passport** webpage includes the Passport in English and Spanish, how to use the Passport help sheets, and a short video- <https://www.oralhealthkansas.org/DentalPassport.html>

Here are some helpful at home oral health resources from Oral Health Kansas for individuals and caregivers:

- **Resources for Adaptive Aids for toothbrushing** - People with disabilities are more likely to experience dental problems when a daily hygiene routine is not practiced. Here are some products that can help you adapt your toothbrushing routine. Available for free download: [Resources for Adaptive Aids](#)
- **Changing it Up** - Toothbrushing is an essential activity that everyone must practice daily to stay healthy. When body movements are limited, effective toothbrushing can be a challenge. [Here](#) are some ideas to improve the way you care for your teeth, because poor oral health can lead to health issues that range from annoying to serious.

By focusing on these aspects during Disability Pride Month, we can work towards ensuring that everyone, regardless of ability, has access to quality oral healthcare and can maintain a healthy smile.



## Pioneers in Health Podcast

The United Methodist Health Ministry Fund has launched a new podcast, Pioneers in Health. With each episode they'll share the inspiring stories of pioneering leaders working to improve health. They'll bring you guests from our state, from our nation and from your backyard to tell their stories of how they broke new ground and changed the landscape of health care.

You can look forward to hearing from community and state leaders, policy makers, advocates, and researchers working on innovative approaches to improving health. Every podcast you'll hear from Health Fund President and CEO David Jordan, who brings perspective and a rich background with building community and leading advocacy in health care. He will lead you through thought-provoking interviews and inspiring conversations with our guests. Click [here](#) for information on the podcast.

## Free Mobile Dental Clinic July 20-21

[Remote Area Medical](#) will be hosting a free dental clinic in Kansas City on July 20-21, 2024. They're looking for volunteers in the following areas:

- Dental - (2-3 dentists) dental triage/screenings, restorative care, & extractions.
- Dental Hygiene - (1-2 hygienists) dental cleaning, screenings, education, & x-ray.
- Dental Assistant - (2-4 RDAs) assist dentist chairside, scribing, x-ray, education, & cleanside.



- Registered Nurse - (1 nurse) to perform general triage & patient questions.
- General Support - (2-5) moving patients from one area to the next, answer general questions, & patient registration.

The clinic is scheduled for July 20-21, 2024 in the Walmart parking lot at 10824 Parallel Pkwy Kansas City, KS 66109.

The link to sign up is at [ramusa.org](https://ramusa.org) - choose the **red VOLUNTEER** at the top right & then the **red REGISTER HERE** at the bottom left of the screen. Click [here](#) to view the flyer.

Share with your networks about the free clinic coming to Kansas City!



## Voter Registration Deadline Coming Up

The deadline to register to vote or update your voter registration information to participate in the 2024 primary election (August 6, 2024) is Tuesday, July 16. To vote in Kansas, you must be a U.S. citizen, a state resident and at least 18 years old on or before Election Day. If you've been convicted of a felony, you also need to be discharged from imprisonment and not on parole or conditional release. If you are not sure if you are registered to vote, click [here](#) to find out information. Your voter registration application must be postmarked or completed online or in-person 21 days before the election you want to vote in.

Dates to remember:

- The deadline to register for the August 6, 2024, primary election is July 16, 2024
- For the primary election, advanced voting starts July 17 and ends August 5. For the general election, it starts October 16 and ends November 4.
- The deadline to register for the November 5, 2024, general election is October 15, 2024.

Click [here](#) for a helpful guide to voting in Kansas



## 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.](#)

Supporting Dental Health Care Coordination for Individuals Dually Eligible for Medicare and Medicaid, July 15, 1:30pm - 3:00pm CST. Register [here](#).

OPEN's Advocacy Assembly: Oral Health on the 2024 Ballot, July 17, 11:00 - 2:00pm CST. Register [here](#).

**Webinar:** Whole Person Care: Interdisciplinary Medical and Oral Health, August 6, 2024 from 12:00pm - 1:00pm CST. Register [here](#).

**Webinar:** Through the AI Lens: Exploring the Impact of Artificial Intelligence and Augmented Intelligence on Dental Public Health, August 13 from 2:00pm-3:00pm CST. 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](mailto:info@oralhealthkansas.org).



This week Oral Health Kansas' Operations and Communications Manager Sonia Olmos is celebrating her 9th anniversary with us. Sonia joined us in the

summer of 2015 after working in a similar role at the former Kansas Health Consumer Coalition. She manages all of our communications, including the Weekly Wednesday Update and social media. Sonia also manages the Brush Book Bed program, Sugary Drink Display, many of our exhibits at conferences and events, and our business operations. We don't know what we would do



without her, and we are so glad she has chosen to share her talents with Oral Health Kansas for nearly a decade. Congratulations, Sonia!



## 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!

### Follow Us



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