



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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OHK Staff Attend OPEN Conference

Oral Health Kansas staff members, Tanya Dorf Brunner, Kathy Hunt, and Devaki Menon, along with former board member Barb Conant, recently attended the mid-year [Oral Health Progress and Equity Network](#) (OPEN)

conference in St. Louis, MO. OPEN is a network of oral health advocates and dental professionals from across the nation that work together intentionally to take on America's oral health challenges so that everyone has an equitable chance to thrive.

This marked OPEN's first in-person meeting since 2019, and Oral Health Kansas was well represented. The Kansas team participated in workshops about integrating medical and dental care, policy development, and social media engagement. Tanya also was a co-presenter for a workshop about effective policymaker communications.

Learn more about how you can join the OPEN Network [here](#).



Kansas Highlighted as a State Strengthening Dental in Medicaid

Nearly 2 million people across the country will soon be gaining access to Medicaid dental benefits and Kansas residents enrolled in KanCare are included! A new [CareQuest Institute blog post](#) provides a rundown of the latest developments in Medicaid dental benefits in Hawaii, Kansas, Maryland, New Hampshire, and

Tennessee from the 2022 legislative session. The blog credits these legislative wins to years of persistent advocates, legislative champions, strong economies, and a growing understanding of the connection between oral health and overall health and the cost savings associated with providing dental benefits and regular care.

The Kansas update reads, "On April 20, Governor Laura Kelly signed the FY2023 state budget, which included \$3.5M in funding to extend dental benefits to all adults enrolled in the state's Medicaid program. Kansas currently provides only emergency extractions to its adult Medicaid members with some additional dental services offered through the state's managed care organizations as value-added benefits. While a final package of services will be designed by the Kansas Division of Health Care Finance in consultation with [Oral Health Kansas](#) and other partners, it is expected that all adult beneficiaries will have access to preventive and restorative care when the new benefit is implemented later this year."

Read the full blog post [here](#), and follow the Kansas adult dental implementation process on our [website](#).



Brushing Teeth Can Stop Pneumonia

A [new story](#) published by Kaiser Health News confirms what oral health professionals have understood for some time: brushing a person's teeth in a hospital can help prevent non-ventilator hospital-acquired pneumonia (NVHAP). The author points out, "Many cases of NVHAP could be avoided if hospital staffers more dutifully brushed the teeth of bedridden patients, according to a growing body of peer-reviewed research papers." The story points out that hospitals are not required to report cases of NVHAP, which results in most hospitals not understanding the origin of this type of pneumonia nor how to prevent it.

The story describes a new movement to call attention to the easy way to prevent NVHAP in hospitals and notes that organizations including the CDC and American Dental Association are working together to raise awareness. Kaiser Health News notes, "According to the National Organization for NV-HAP Prevention, which was founded in 2020, this pneumonia infects about 1 in every 100 hospital patients and kills 15% to 30% of them."

What can you do to help? Encourage anyone you know who is going into the hospital to bring a toothbrush and advocate that their teeth are brushed every day. Hospital systems can and should incorporate toothbrushing in their routines, but each individual can advocate for themselves as well.



Kansas Public Health Association Call for Abstracts

The Kansas Public Health Association (KPHA) is now accepting abstracts for the 79th annual KPHA conference. This year's theme is "Engage, Collaborate, Grow: Strengthening the Kansas Public Health System". Abstract submissions are open until 5PM on Friday, July 29, 2022. Learn more and submit an abstract [here](#).

The KPHA conference will be held:

Thursday, September 29, 2022

9AM – 4PM

Wichita State University Metropolitan Complex



Disability Pride Month

Disability Pride Month occurs every July to commemorate the passing of the landmark [Americans with Disabilities Act](#) (ADA) in July 1990. The ADA is a federal law that prohibits discrimination against a person with a disability who is seeking employment or access to services, including dental services. Dental professionals are

required by law to treat a person with disability on the same basis they would treat non-disabled patients as well as make reasonable modifications to facilitate access to the dental office by persons with disabilities.

Oral Health Kansas has developed many resources for both dental professionals serving patients with disabilities as well as consumers with disabilities themselves. Resources include education on toothbrushing, a dental passport, guide on finding the right dental office, and more. We invite you to check out our resources on the webpages listed below.

[Children with Disabilities](#)

[Adults with Disabilities](#)

[Consumer & Dental Professional Resources](#)



Upcoming Events

- **Webinar:** Racism and Our Families' Health: Connecting the Dots: Talking About Race in Nonprofits/Organizations (2 part series). Thursday, July 21st (Part 2) from 5pm-7pm CST. Click [here](#) for more information.
- **Webinar:** A Discussion on Anti-Racism in Dentistry, July 21 at 12 p.m. CST Register [here](#).
- **16th Kansas Disability Caucus** on August 10th - 12th. Click [here](#) for details.
- **Webinar: The Science of Advocacy**, August 18 at 7pm CST. Register [here](#).
- **Kansas Public Health Association** annual conference, September 29 in Wichita, Kansas. Click here as more information is shared.
- **Community Care Network of Kansas** annual conference, October 5-7 in Manhattan, Kansas. Click [here](#) for more information.

- **2022 Conference on Oral Health:** Friday, November 4. Conference will be a hybrid event. Thursday, November 3: Dental Champions Reception.

Dates to remember!

- July 13: First day advance by mail ballots are mailed and advance in-person voting may begin. Check with your county election office or county clerk's office to find out when and where you can vote early.
- July 26: Deadline for voters to apply for advance mail ballot
- **August 2: Primary Election**



Congratulations to former Oral Health Kansas staffer Julie Parnell for being part of the team named June 2022 Person of the Month by Stormont Vail Health. Julie left Oral



Health Kansas to become a nurse, and her Spine Center Charge Nurse team was honored for the work they do to go out of their way to provide safety, support, and happiness to everyone they serve. We are not surprised at all – Julie always goes above and beyond!



Sugary Drink Display

Out of an abundance of caution, we are suspending use of the Sugary Drink Display until

further notice.



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