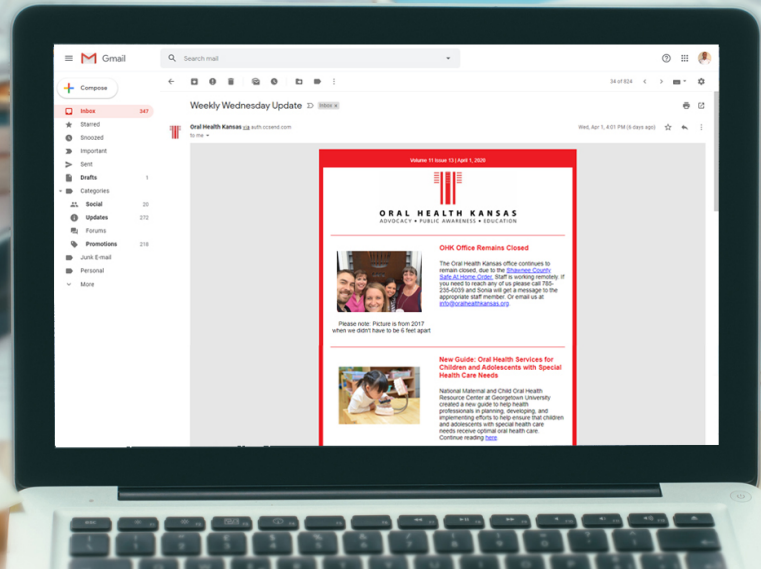




WEEKLY WEDNESDAY UPDATE

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](#).

July 22, 2026

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[Weekly
Wednesday
Update.](#)



Oral Health Kansas Presents to School Nurses

Education Manager, Abby Richwine, attended the Kansas School Nurses Conference last week in Wichita and presented to school staff from across the state. Oral Health Kansas has exhibited or presented at the conference for several years now! School nurses are important to children's health because sometimes they may be the only health provider that a child interacts with. This is an opportunity for us to provide them with dental resources and ways they can help students and families get the dental care they need.

Teachers and nurses have shared with us that students will have a toothache and not be able to concentrate. The National Institute of Health has stated U.S. students miss over 34 million school hours each year due to unplanned dental care and oral health issues. On average, children miss roughly 2 days of school per year directly due to dental problems, and students with poor oral health are nearly three times more likely to miss school because of dental pain.

What can nurses do to help?

- Find out if the child has seen a dentist and when.
- Try to determine what dental issue the child has.
- Need help with finding a dentist for the family? You can find options on our [Finding a Dentist page](#).
- Provide oral health education. Talk to students about the importance of brushing their teeth two times a day, flossing and eating healthy foods!

Oral Health Kansas has [oral health fact sheets](#) with helpful information that teachers or nurses can discuss with children or families. Have children work on hidden pictures related to oral health. [What's in Your Mouth](#) is a fun way to talk about what happens to your mouth if you don't brush.

Not sure how you can help or have other questions? Email us at info@oralhealthkansas.org



Join the Shawnee County Oral Health Coalition

The Shawnee County Oral Health Coalition continues to add new members to their coalition. For over 10 years, the coalition has been going strong and sharing the Brush Book Bed model with families. The community members are all volunteers and from organizations around the Topeka area such as community dental clinics, early

childhood programs, health department, United Way and Kansas Children's Service League. Through community engagement, they help identify oral health needs, support initiatives that increase access to care, and promote the importance of oral health as an essential part of overall health. Members may volunteer to exhibit at community events and share oral health resources.

The coalition meets every other month from 12:00pm-1:00pm. The meetings are virtual although members may host at their place of employment. The meetings are run by two Co-Chairs. If you are interested in joining or simply would like to learn more, reach out to us at info@oralhealthkansas.org.

Join Us as a Sponsor or Exhibitor

The annual Conference on Oral Health is a yearly event that brings together advocates, dental providers, health care providers and professionals, students, educators, insurers, and people with lived experience.



They share with us that our conference is an opportunity for them to meet individuals in Kansas and surrounding states that are doing similar work as their own. It's exciting for us to hear that our conference is how people find their peer support and learn new techniques!

Exhibiting or sponsoring at the Conference on Oral Health puts your organization directly in front of a highly engaged audience who are actively shaping the future of the field. This is a unique opportunity to showcase your products, services, or programs to decision-makers who influence purchasing, referrals, and policy at the practice, community, and state levels. Beyond visibility, exhibiting and sponsoring offer meaningful opportunities to build relationships, generate leads, and demonstrate your organization's commitment to advancing oral health equity and access.

The all-day conference will be held on Friday, November 13 at the KU Edwards Campus in Overland Park. You can view the various sponsorship opportunities and exhibitor opportunity [here](#). If you are a returning exhibitor, you get 10% off! You can register [at this link](#). If you have questions, reach out to us at info@oralhealthkansas.org.

A promotional poster for a webinar. At the top left is a logo consisting of two overlapping hearts. To its right, the title "Behind the Curtain: How Dental Advocacy Creates Change" is written in a sans-serif font. Below the title, the date "August 11, 2026" and time "12:00-1:00pm" are listed. A circular badge on the right side of the poster says "Free CE". The main body of the poster contains a paragraph of text describing the webinar's focus on partnerships, persistence, and data-informed storytelling. Below this is a registration call to action. At the bottom, there are logos for "Oral Health Kansas" and "KDA Kansas Dental Association", a "Scan to register!" prompt, and a QR code with the text "Scan Me" below it.

Register for Behind the Curtain: How Dental Advocacy Creates Change

We're excited to bring you another webinar hosted by Oral Health Kansas, the Kansas Dental Association and the Pathways to Oral Health team. On August 11 from 12:00pm-1:00pm, Behind the Curtain: How Dental Advocacy Creates Change will give you a look behind the scenes of advocacy. This webinar will explore the many components of effective advocacy, including preparing written and in-person testimony, building relationships with legislators and policymakers, listening to providers and consumers to understand their needs and challenges, and navigating changing state and national political landscapes. Participants will also learn how ongoing collaboration with state agencies, including the Kansas Department of Health and

Environment (KDHE), Medicaid managed care organizations, providers, advocates, and community partners help drive meaningful systems change.

Whether you are new to advocacy or looking to strengthen your impact, or if you are just curious about what Oral Health Kansas is doing every day to improve the oral health of Kansans this session will provide practical insights into how partnerships, persistence, and data-informed storytelling contribute to improving Medicaid rates, addressing systems challenges, and expanding access to oral health care for Kansans.

[Register today](#) to learn how advocacy efforts at the local, state, and national levels can influence policy, strengthen systems, and improve access to oral health care for Kansas Medicaid beneficiaries. Receive 1.0 Free CE!



American Disabilities Act Celebrates its 36th Year!

This year, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) celebrates their 36th anniversary on July 26th. National Disability Independence Day commemorates the 1990 signing of the ADA. It has played a significant role in shaping access to oral health care for people with disabilities. Dental offices are required to make reasonable accommodations, such as accessible

facilities, communication support, and modified care approaches, to ensure patients with disabilities can receive treatment on an equal basis.

Despite how far we have come, individuals with disabilities continue to face barriers to consistent oral health care, including a shortage of providers trained in disability competent care, transportation challenges, and communication gaps between patients and providers. Pathways to Oral Health is a collaborative initiative between the dental and disabilities communities in Kansas, dedicated to improving access to dental care and expanding education on oral health for individuals with disabilities who rely on KanCare as well as dental providers. The [My Dental Care Passport](#) is a tool to help individuals with disabilities communicate their needs before they get to the dentists office. The [Sensory Friendly Modification Guide](#) is a document that highlights products and modifications that dental teams can implement to improve patient comfort, cooperation, and overall experience.

To learn more about [Pathways to Oral Health](#), visit their website for more resources for individuals and providers and their dental offices.

How Unmet Needs Delay Treatment

CareQuest Institute for Oral Health recently shared a report on how unmet dental needs can delay medical treatment, such as heart disease and cancer treatments. The study found that about 15% of adults receiving one or more medical treatments (joint replacement, immunotherapy, radiation, heart surgery, or chemotherapy) had their medical care delayed by their physician due to oral health problems.

Other findings include:



- Joint replacement was the most commonly delayed treatment due to oral health problems.
- Younger adults are more likely to have their medical treatment delayed due to oral health problems: more than a third of adults aged 18-29 had their medical treatment delayed (36%), compared to only 6% of adults aged 60 or above.
- Adults identifying as Black (non-Hispanic) reported having their medical treatment delayed in the largest percentage (31%).
- Approximately one in ten adults with private dental

insurance (11%) had their medical care delayed due to oral health problems, compared with 43% of adults with Medicaid dental insurance.

You can read the full report [here](#).



Upcoming Events

- Self paced courses: [Providing Oral Health Care to Autistic Individuals](#) and [Caring for Individuals with Disabilities: Practical Considerations for Dental Providers](#).
- **Webinar:** Overcoming Oral Health Disparities: Evidence for New Approaches, July 30 at 6:00pm CST. Register [here](#).
- **Webinar:** Substance Use Disorders and Oral Health in People Living with HIV, August 27 at 12:00pm CST. Click [here](#) to register.
- 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.



The Candidate Meet and Greets organized by the Kansas Hospital Association, Kansas Dental Association, Community Care Network of Kansas, and several other statewide health organizations are well under way! Last week's Lenexa forum and this week's Wichita forum were an opportunity for candidates for

the Kansas House of Representatives to meet advocates and share their ties to health care.

Oral Health Kansas staff along with board members and advisory committee members have attended and visited with candidates. Thank you to Dr. Jill Jenkins, Dr. Rob Kiser, Dr. Kent Haverkamp, Trina Morgan, Stephanie Coleman, Melanie Jacobs, and Robyn Kirkpatrick for attending the forums with us!



The next candidate forum will be on Tuesday, May 28 in McPherson. If you want to learn more, email brobertson@oralhealthkansas.org. If you attend the event, make sure to find a staff from Oral Health Kansas and come say hi. We want to know you're there!



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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