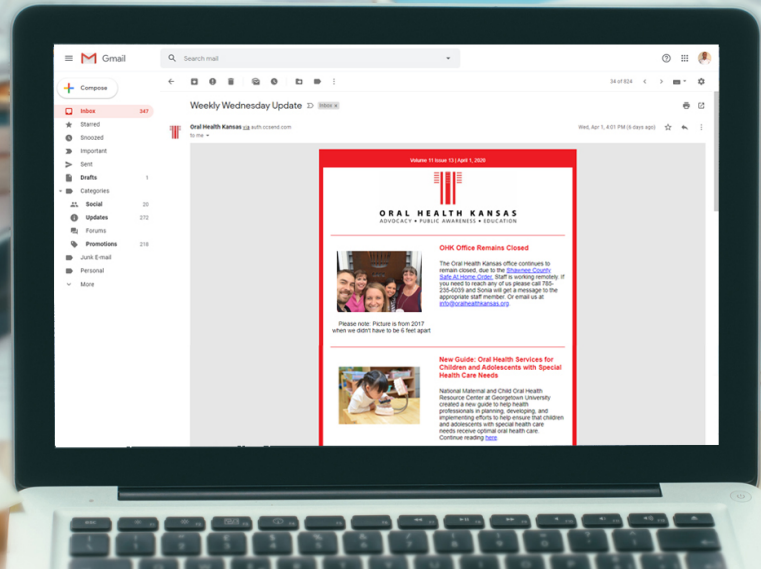




WEEKLY WEDNESDAY UPDATE

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 8, 2026

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[**Weekly
Wednesday
Update.**](#)

A Greeting from the New Executive Director

Hello to the Oral Health Kansas community!

My name is Brooks Robertson, and I am honored to introduce myself as the incoming Executive Director of Oral Health Kansas. I am joining OHK from a background in mental health and suicide prevention, where I was focused on advocacy, education and training development, coalition building, and evidence-based prevention strategies. I have had the opportunity to coordinate statewide initiatives and work with partners across sectors to build sustainable outreach and prevention programs. I'm excited to bring this experience to Oral Health Kansas and have already been so thrilled to see how the



organization shares my values of close collaboration, data-driven outcomes, and centering a community voice to achieve a shared mission.

I want to express deep gratitude to Tanya Dorf Brunner for her extraordinary 17 years of leadership. Tanya's vision and persistence have shaped Oral Health Kansas into a dynamic leader of the public health sphere in Kansas and nationwide, and she will continue to be trusted and essential partner in her next chapter as Executive Director of the American Network of Oral Health Coalitions. Tanya has graciously agreed to assist in a thoughtful leadership transition as we steward her tremendous contributions to Oral Health Kansas and to all Kansans.

Supporting the high-quality work of the Oral Health Kansas team is my top priority as I learn from partners, stakeholders, and community members in the coming weeks. Our mission of improving oral health in Kansas through advocacy, public awareness, and education remains our north star which we tirelessly pursue.

So excited to join the team and to meet you all

Brooks Robertson



Celebrating Excellence!

With a little over a month left, don't miss your chance to nominate someone for the Excellence in Oral Health Awards. Nominate a leader who should be celebrated! This nomination is a testament of the hard work and dedication an individual pours into their work. You can also nominate an organization! There are several categories to choose from, but please only choose ONE for each nomination.

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 with any questions about the award nominations.



Exclusive Exposure Opportunities

The annual Conference on Oral Health brings together individuals from various backgrounds and parts of the state! If you're interested in exhibiting to market your products or resources, join us on Friday, November 13 at the KU Edwards Campus. Spots fill up fast! The main space for exhibitors is in the conference room with attendees, so visibility is high! Exhibitors have access to a unique forum to engage

with an audience eager to explore and establish valuable connections. Also, why not learn from other exhibitors?

If you're a returning exhibitor, you will receive 10% off the exhibit fee. Exhibitors have access to the conference sessions and all meals. Save your spot by emailing us at info@oralhealthkansas.org and we'll get you on the list.



Medicaid Value Added Benefits Webinar Recording Now Available

Last month, we held a webinar hosted by Oral Health Kansas, the Kansas Dental Association, and the Pathways to Oral Health team on Medicaid Value Added Benefits (VABs): What You Need to Know. VABs are extra perks offered

by the three KanCare (Medicaid) managed care organizations (MCOs) on top of standard KanCare coverage. If you are a provider or dental office staff or just want to learn more, watch [this](#) recording for the short, 30-minute webinar!

If you have any questions email us at info@oralhealthkansas.org.



Disability Pride Month and Oral Health

Observed each July, Disability Pride Month celebrates the history, achievements, and contributions of people with disabilities while promoting inclusion, accessibility, and equal opportunities. It is also a time to recognize that everyone deserves access to quality healthcare, including oral healthcare.

People with disabilities often face barriers to receiving routine dental care, including transportation challenges, inaccessible facilities, communication barriers, a shortage of trained providers, and limited insurance coverage. These barriers can contribute to poorer oral health outcomes and affect overall health and well-being.

The Pathways to Oral Health Project team is dedicated to improving access to quality dental care for individuals with disabilities (IDD) by removing barriers to essential services. We envision a future where people with IDD have seamless access to comprehensive dental care, free from barriers. Through advocacy, collaboration, and innovation, we strive to create an inclusive, equitable system that supports optimal oral health and well-being for all. [Learn more](#) about the work Pathways to Oral Health is doing.

This Disability Pride Month, let's celebrate the strengths and diversity of the disability community while continuing to work toward a future where quality oral healthcare is accessible to all.



Upcoming Events

- Self paced courses: [Providing Oral Health Care to Autistic Individuals](#) and [Caring for Individuals with Disabilities: Practical Considerations for Dental Providers](#).
- Webinar: Special Needs Oral Health Lunch & Learn: Behavior Management for Pediatric Dental Patients with Autism, July 17 from 12:00pm-1:00pm. Click [here](#) to register.
- 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.



On Monday, July 6, Sonia celebrated her 11th anniversary with Oral Health Kansas (OHK). Sonia is the Operations and Communications Manager for OHK. Sonia is the office behind-the-scenes problem solver, keeps everything running smoothly. She also makes sure OHK's message reaches the people that need it the most through our social media and Weekly Wednesday Update.



Sonia is excited to be sharing her work anniversary with OHK's new Executive Director!



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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