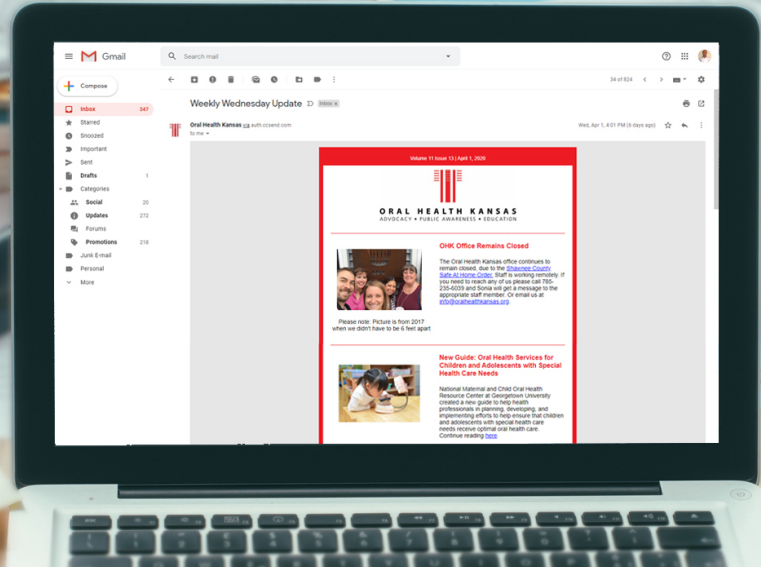




WEEKLY WEDNESDAY UPDATE

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.](#)



Deesha Bhaumik
Picture courtesy of ADA

American Dental Association to Speak at Conference on Oral Health

We're excited to announce Deesha Bhaumik, PhD, MS, Senior Health Policy Analyst with the American Dental Association (ADA) Health Policy Institute (HPI) will be presenting at our annual Conference on Oral Health on Friday, November 13. Bhaumik leads both research and advocacy for various ADA Health Policy Institute projects focused on dental policy. She is responsible for both quantitative and qualitative analysis, keeping HPI informed and up

to date on new oral health policy issues, particularly in Medicaid, Medicare, and the Affordable Care Act.

Let's make Deesha feel welcome as she visits Kansas! We'll be opening up conference registration later this month. The all-day conference will be held at the KU Edwards Campus in Overland Park. If you're interested in sponsoring the event or exhibiting, you can view our sponsorship levels [here](#). Exhibit space is limited. If you are a returning exhibitor, you will receive a 10% discount. If you have any questions about exhibiting or sponsoring, email Sonia at solmos@oralhealthkansas.org.

Thank you to our current sponsors: Delta Dental of Kansas, United Healthcare Community Plan and REACH Healthcare Foundation.



Are You Registered for Behind the Curtain?

Next week is the **FREE** webinar Behind the Curtain: How Dental Advocacy Creates Change, hosted by Oral Health Kansas, the Kansas Dental Association and the Pathways to Oral Health team. On **Tuesday, August 11 from 12:00pm-1:00pm**, join us as we 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 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! If you have any questions, email us at info@oralhealthkansas.org.



Original sugary drink display

Award Winner Creates Sugary Drink Display

If you are familiar with our traveling Sugary Drink Display, do you know how it got started? Dental Champions member and previous Oral Health Kansas staff member, Julie Parnell, came up with the brilliant idea! She built a display to show the sugary drink content of popular beverages, and she worked with the Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library

to display it. The library liked it so much that they shared a description and photos with all of the public libraries in the state. The drink display was at the library for one month, and when the month was over, other libraries began to request it. The display was seen by pre-schools, health departments, and schools at the libraries, and then they began requesting it too! The display is 16 years old and still going strong!

In 2017, Julie won the Outstanding Dental Champion Award. Julie used the leadership skills she gained during Dental Champions to engage her creativity and passion for teaching people about oral health to build a program that now defines the organization. She has made a lasting impact on not just Oral Health Kansas, but countless people across the state who continue to have the chance to learn from the drink display.

Do you know a Dental Champion Alumni or someone who has made a lasting oral health impact? Nominate them for an Excellence in Oral Health Award! There are several categories to choose from:

- **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 [Excellence in Oral Health Award](#) or here for the [Ron Alexander Outstanding Dental Champion Award](#) Email info@oralhealthkansas.org with any questions about the awards nominations. We ask that you do not nominate someone who has won an award in the past to allow everyone an opportunity.



Kansas Mission of Mercy
Making a Difference

2027 Kansas Mission of Mercy to be Held in Kansas City

The Kansas Dental Charitable Foundation will be having the Kansas Mission of Mercy (KMOM) at the Homefield KCK at 9250 State Ave. in Kansas City. KMOM is a free dental clinic open to anyone but it is first come first served. You can find what

patient services are available [here](#).

Volunteer registration will be open in December. The event space is big, and they will need several volunteers to make it a good event. Mark your calendars for January 29 and January 30. If you can't volunteer share the information with your networks!

Click the link to stay updated on information regarding the [Kansas Mission of Mercy](#).



National Health Center Week

During National Health Center Week which is celebrated August 2 - 8, we recognize the vital role Community Dental Clinics across the state play in providing affordable, comprehensive, whole-person care. It is an opportunity to

highlight the essential dental services these clinics deliver; services that are often overlooked but are critical to improving the health and well-being of the communities they serve. Community Dental Clinics provide affordable, primary oral health care for children and adults on a sliding-fee scale based on income for patients with KanCare (Medicaid), private insurance, or no insurance. To find a list of clinics, you can visit the Finding a Dentist page on the [Community Dental Clinics](#) section on the Oral Health Kansas website.

The [New Tips and Tricks Finding a Dentist](#) one page handout provides different steps on how to find a dentist in Kansas. It's also available in [Spanish](#)!



New Series: HPI Perspectives

American Dental Association Health Policy Institute (HPI) has launched a new series of articles, [HPI Perspectives](#), leveraging the latest data from HPI and other sources to provide concise but in-depth analyses of the most important trends impacting

the dental market. In addition to the piece on AI covered above, check out other recent *HPI Perspectives* pieces:

- [Federal Loan Cap May Put Dental School Out of Reach for Some Students](#) - as of July 1, 2026, dental students are only able to borrow \$50,000 per year in federal loans to pay for their education. But dental education often costs more than this new limit. This article outlines the long-term outcomes this new loan cap may have on dental schools and students as well as on the overall dentist workforce.
- [Dental Student Demographics Have Changed. And Might Change Even More](#) - the dental student body is becoming more diverse in terms of gender and race/ethnicity, but certain groups remain underrepresented compared to the U.S. population. HPI uses years of education survey data to analyze the complex interplay between economics and demographic diversity in dentistry.
- [We Have a Major Dental Hygienist Shortage. It's Unlikely to Go Away Soon](#) - dental hygienists are the most difficult to recruit in terms of dental practice staff. HPI explores why this shortage is occurring and how it may continue to evolve in response to labor market forces.
- [Migration of U.S. Dentists Across State Lines](#) - dentists are on the move, with some states standing out more than others in terms of dentist net migration over a five-year period. How do these patterns vary

You can find more information on [their website](#).



Upcoming Events

- Self paced courses: [Providing Oral Health Care to Autistic Individuals](#) and [Caring for Individuals with Disabilities: Practical Considerations for Dental Providers](#).
- **Webinar:** Behind the Curtain: How Dental Advocacy Creates Change, August 11 at 12:00pm 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 theme for National Health Center Week is "Building Innovative Care Where It Matters Most". This year's theme reflects the creativity,



dedication, and heart that Kansas health center staff, providers, board members, and volunteers bring to care every single day. Community Care Network of Kansas (CCNK) is the primary care association representing Kansas's network of Community Health Centers. These are the federally qualified health centers and safety-net clinics that provide healthcare access across the state, especially in underserved and rural communities. CCNK connects clinics and providers with the resources they need to better serve patients with intellectual and developmental disabilities. They help bridge the gap between clinics and the support services available to them, and they are an essential partner in Oral Health Kansas's Pathways project. We appreciate their partnership and the vital role they play in expanding access to care



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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