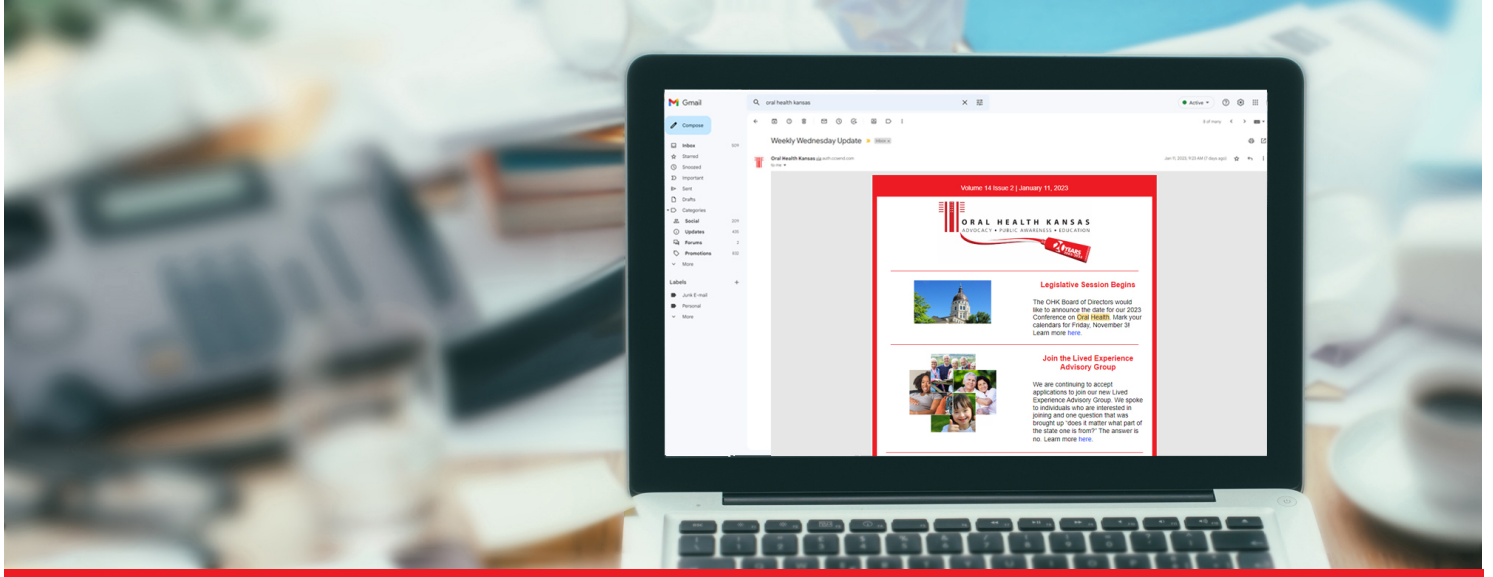




WEEKLY WEDNESDAY UPDATE

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](#).

September 2, 2026

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Scan the QR code



or click here to
sign up for our

[Weekly
Wednesday
Update.](#)



Award Nominations Extended This Week!

If you didn't submit a nomination for the Excellence in Oral Health Awards, that's not a problem! We have extended the deadline for this Friday, September 4. Right before you head out for the extended holiday weekend!

Some important things to remember when submitting a nomination. How has this individual or individuals made an effort to improve the oral health of the community? Are they going above and beyond their daily tasks to help make improvements?

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, September 4 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.



Save the Date for the Annual Conference on Oral Health

The Conference on Oral Health will be on Friday, November 13 at the KU Edwards Campus in Overland Park. This year there will be no virtual option. We're excited to have everyone in person to join us all day. This allows more opportunities for conversations and networking with people that you

may not see in person very often. We'll have plenary and breakout sessions!

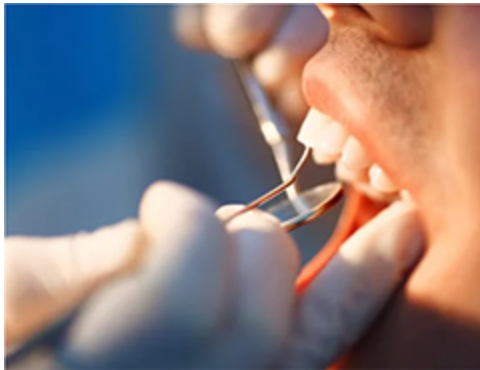
Watch for registration to open next week! The topics you'll find at our conference include:

- Oral Health Policy and Election Update
- Enhancing Patient-Centered Care with the My Dental Care Passport & Sensory Modifications Guide
- Resilience, Well-Being, and Success in the Workplace
- Building Your Advocacy Skills
- Shifting the Narrative: Amplifying Voices
- The State of Dental Practice: Costs, Insurance, and Access

Yes! CE's will be offered. You can earn your CE's in time before you have to renew your license by the end of the year.

We have exhibitor and sponsorship opportunities! Exhibitors will have access to all of the conference sessions and meals, while visiting with the participants. View the various sponsorship and exhibitor opportunities [here](#). You must use [this](#) link to register as an exhibitor or sponsor.

If you have any questions, email Sonia at solmos@oralhealthkansas.org



How Labor Day Connects to Oral Health

Oral health isn't just a personal health issue. It has a real impact on the workforce. Untreated dental pain and infections can lead to missed work, reduced concentration, and lower productivity. Visible oral health issues can affect confidence, especially if you have to work with clients or even during interviews. Chronic oral health problems are linked to broader health conditions (for example, heart disease or diabetes) that can affect long-term employability and health costs. Workers in jobs with lower wages, part time jobs or hourly positions, may not be provided with dental benefits and are far more likely to delay or skip dental visits due to cost.

For workers or any individual who doesn't have access to dental insurance, they can visit clinics that offer free or reduced services. These are called [Community Dental Clinics](#). It's very important to maintain your oral health to prevent any issues. Maintaining your oral health consists of, but not limited to:

- Brush twice a day with fluoride toothpaste.
- Floss every day!
- Drink water to stay hydrated but it also swishes in your mouth to keep your teeth clean.
- Choose healthy food and drink options.
- [Toothbrush Tips](#) (yes, there are tips on how to pick a toothbrush)
- Visit a dentist if possible.

For other helpful ideas, visit the [Consumer Resources webpage](#).



Read about Pathways on Kansas Center for Rural Health

This week, you'll find us in the [Kansas Center for Rural Health newsletter](#), as we share our resources for the Pathways to Oral Health Project. Education Manager, Abby Richwine, provided tips on how to make dental office experiences for individuals with a disability feel more comfortable. If you are a provider, we also have tips to help you make small accommodations to your office. Check out

Abby's article [here](#)! If you have any questions or if we can be helpful with more tips, email Abby at arichwine@oralhealthkansas.org.



Check Out this Micro-Learning Series

The Inclusive Dental Practice: Serving Patients with Disabilities Learning Pathway is a self-paced microlearning series from New Mexico State University designed to help dental professionals provide more inclusive, accessible, and patient-centered care for people with disabilities. The short, easy-to-complete modules offer practical strategies for understanding patient needs, improving communication, and creating a more welcoming dental

experience for every patient.

Together, these courses provide dental professionals, hygienists, assistants, and office staff with tools to improve patient comfort, strengthen trust with patients and caregivers, and support equitable access to oral healthcare. Upon completion, learners will have a deeper understanding of how to adapt dental care practices to better serve individuals with disabilities while promoting dignity, safety, and improved health outcomes.

Find out more at this [link](#)!



This September Let's Focus on Healthy Eating

September is Fruits and Veggies Month as well as National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month. This month focuses on raising awareness of the importance of eating more fruits and vegetables and encouraging healthier eating habits for families.

Fruits and vegetables are packed with essential vitamins, minerals, fiber, and antioxidants that support nearly every part of the body. Diets rich in fruits and vegetables are linked to lower risks of heart disease, stroke, certain cancers, and obesity.

Fruits and vegetables play a direct role in oral health. Crunchy fruits and vegetables like apples, carrots, and celery help naturally clean teeth and stimulate saliva production, which washes away food particles and neutralizes harmful acids. Vitamin C-rich foods such as oranges, strawberries and bell peppers support healthy gums and help prevent gum disease. Fiber-rich produce promotes saliva flow, which is one of the mouth's best natural defenses against cavities. Choosing whole fruits over fruit juices or dried fruit reduces sugar exposure to teeth, since juices and dried fruits tend to be more concentrated in

sugar and stick to teeth longer. Also, watering down the juice can help reduce the risk but does not eliminate it. Drink in moderation!

Check out our [Tips and Tricks Healthy Eating for a Healthy Mouth](#). [Healthy Snacking for Young Children](#) gives tips for eating healthy, not just for young children. These ideas can be for any age group. Get kids involved in picking out or preparing fruits and veggies to build lifelong healthy habits early.

Cook's Corner is a book full of recipes. Try out these simple, fun, and healthy snack recipes for young children. Recipes for Healthy Snacks ([English](#), [Spanish](#))



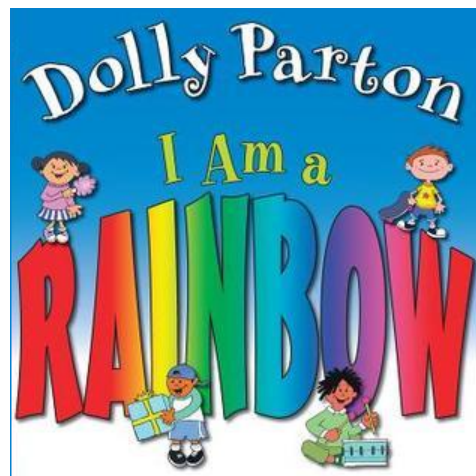
Upcoming Events

- Self paced courses: [Providing Oral Health Care to Autistic Individuals](#) and [Caring for Individuals with Disabilities: Practical Considerations for Dental Providers](#).
- **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.



As we continue to mourn the passing of singer Dolly Parton, we reflect on the good work she did creating avenues for families to have access to books.

Through the Imagination Library, over 300 million families with children ages 0-5 were able to receive a book every month free of charge. Although Dolly is no longer able to personally share the joys, she will continue to provide books to families and her legacy will continue. If you haven't signed up for the Imagination Library, you can find more information [here](#).



The [Brush Book Bed project](#) is another reputable program that helps families with routines and taking care of their oral health. Below are the steps that will help you

make positive efforts to good oral health while enjoying time together.

1. Each night, help your children to brush their teeth.
2. Read a favorite book (or two)!
3. Get to bed at a regular time each night.



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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