



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](#).

Click here to sign up for our [Weekly Wednesday Update](#).

September 21, 2022

Volume 13, Issue 38

Public Health and Policy Featured in New Series

Oral Health Kansas is pleased to announce we will host a new series of pre-conference sessions throughout the month of October. The series will cover public oral health and policy issues from the halls of Congress to the Topeka Statehouse. Each of the sessions will prepare Conference on Oral Health attendees to understand the basics of public oral health, publicly



available oral health data, policy issues from the federal to the state level, and how to get involved in advocacy.

October 7: Public Oral Health 101

This session will share insight about the roles of a dentist and dental hygienist in public health, how they can create a shared vision of optimal health and improve disparities in oral health, and how coalitions can make an impact on access to care. The creator of the National Oral Health Data Portal will show participants how to explore this exciting new national data resource.

October 14: Federal Oral Health Policy

Federal policy experts from Families USA and Community Catalyst will review the current federal oral health policy issues, including Medicare and Medicaid dental coverage, and share ways Kansas advocates can get involved.

October 21: Oral Health Policy Across the Country

State oral health coalition leaders from Missouri, Maryland, and Hawaii will join policy analysts from the National Conference of State Legislatures to review the policy issues other states are tackling to improve oral health.

October 28: Advocating for policy change in Kansas

Oral Health Kansas will share our advocacy toolkit that can help dental professionals, students, public health workers, and more learn the basics of being an advocate for better oral health. A legislator will be available to describe the best ways to educate policymakers about oral health.

Make plans to join us at noon each Friday in October for this lunch and learn series.

These sessions are free, and registration details coming soon!



**During Hispanic Heritage Month
Take Stock of Disparities**

As we commemorate Hispanic Heritage Month it is important to take stock in the dental disparities people in the Hispanic community face. According to a [2020 report published by the Kansas Health Institute](#), Kansas adults

who are Hispanic are twice as likely to not have dental insurance as any other group. The same report showed that children who are Hispanic are over three times more at risk of reporting unmet dental needs than non-Hispanic white children.

The [American Dental Association's Health Policy Institute's data](#) shows that less than 4% of dentists in the U.S. are Hispanic, while over 12% of the population is Hispanic. This data report says, "The racial mix of the dentist workforce does not reflect the U.S. population." New research out this month also from the Health Policy Institutes shows that a dentist's race plays the biggest role in Medicaid participation and that dentists of color see a disproportionately larger share of Medicaid patients.

The data is clear. The disparities in oral health and access to dental care affect thousands of Hispanic Kansans every day. And the dental workforce is not reflective of the population, especially for Hispanic people. Solutions to these challenges are complex, but a few simple ideas can be a step in the right direction. The new Medicaid dental benefits for adults in Kansas has the potential to cover more Hispanic adults who are enrolled in Medicaid. This can bring down the dental uninsurance rate. Changing the workforce is a long-term challenge, but simple things like talking with elementary students about the possibility of a career in dentistry could help some young people who are Hispanic begin to see this as a path they may want to pursue.



Alzheimer's and Oral Health

During Healthy Aging Month, we look at the effects of Alzheimer's on oral health. There are three major stages of the disease: mild, moderate, and severe. Each stage presents with different behavioral and psychological symptoms. These are accompanied by continuous physical decline, which results in changes in capacity to perform activities of daily living, including oral hygiene. OHK has created a [brochure with information on adaptive aids](#) that can help older adults with toothbrushing.

People with poor dental hygiene are 21 percent more likely to develop Alzheimer's disease later in life. That's according to a [study](#) recently published in the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* found that poor oral health as well as tooth loss increased the risk of dementia and cognitive decline. Read more about the study in [healthline](#).



Baby Safety Month

September is Baby Safety Month. One way to focus on safety are ways to prevent oral injuries. As infants start to walk, they're more prone to injuries to the mouth.

Monitor your baby as much as you can to prevent injuries from falls. Infants also like to put objects in their mouths.

Don't allow them to put items in their mouths that are

sharp. Provide several soft toys or teethers to chew on. Pacifiers get lost often but it's not safe to tie the pacifier around the infants neck because of the risk of choking. Find [pacifier clips](#) to hook on the clothes.

Check out OHK's [Dental First Aid Kit \(Spanish\)](#) for ways to be prepared in case of injuries to the mouth.



KPHA Annual Conference Next Week!

The Kansas Public Health Association (KPHA) Conference is next week in Wichita. Spots are still available to register. You can attend in person or virtually. Research helps public health practitioners better understand the factors that influence health and the value of evidence-based practices. And while the state's research entities are critical to advancing public health research in Kansas, this should be a shared process that includes local and state public health agencies. There will be discussion about the Kansas public health action and research agenda and the opportunities we have to collectively move this work forward. Go to the [KPHA website](#) to learn more!

Upcoming Events

- **Kansas Public Health Association** annual conference, September 29 in Wichita, Kansas. Click [here](#) as more information is shared.
- **Webinar:** Oral Health's Link to Preventing Pneumonia, September 29 at 12pm CST. Register [here](#)



- **Community Care Network of Kansas** annual conference, October 5-7 in Manhattan, Kansas. Click [here](#) for more information.
- **Water Fluoridation Summit** (in person and virtual), October 13-14, 2022 at the Holiday Inn in Poplar Bluff, Missouri. Click [here](#) to register.
- **2022 Conference on Oral Health:** Friday, November 4. Conference will be a hybrid event. Thursday, November

3: Dental Champions Reception.

Conference on Oral Health Preconference Sessions

- October 7 - Public Oral Health 101
- October 14 - Federal Oral Health Policy
- October 21 - Oral Health Policy Across the Country
- October 28 - Advocating for policy change in Kansas

Deadlines to remember for General Election:

October 18: Deadline to [register to vote](#) in the General Election

October 19: First day advance by mail ballots are mailed and advance in-person voting may begin

November 1: Deadline for votes to [apply for advance mail ballot](#)

November 8: General Election



OHK staff, Kathy Hunt, and Dental Champions Alumni, Stephanie Augustine, held a Teeth for Two workshop in Hutchinson last week to home visitors from Parents as



L to R: Kathy Hunt and Stephanie Augustine

Teachers programs across central Kansas. There were 26 engaged participants and appreciative of all the information and resources provided for them. One participant said, "This is exactly the information I needed".

This is the final workshop and we appreciate the support provided by United Methodist Health Ministry Fund.



Sugary Drink Display

Click [here](#) to learn more about sugary drink display reservations!

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