



# ORAL HEALTH KANSAS

ADVOCACY • PUBLIC AWARENESS • EDUCATION

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## In This Issue

[New Study](#)

[Free Dental Care for Kids](#)

[UMKC Offers Free Dental Services](#)

[KMOM Volunteer Registration](#)

[Drink Display](#)

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## New Study: Low-Income Adults Challenged to Maintain Dental Health

The [Association of Health Care Journalists](#) published a story on January 7 about a new study that shows that while nearly all Americans value keeping their teeth healthy, low-income adults have difficulty attaining that goal. The study, by the [ADA's Health Policy Institute](#), calls on policymakers to "rethink" how dental care is provided. The authors note, "Implementing a comprehensive dental benefit for Medicaid adults in states that currently lack one is estimated

## 2016 Kansas Legislative Session Kicks Off

This week began the 2016 Kansas Legislative Session. The Kansas Health Institute (KHI) published an [Issue Brief](#) describing health-related topics that may be considered this year.



to cost \$1.4 billion to \$1.6 billion per year," and that the annual expenditure for emergency room dental visits is similar. Kansas is one of the states that does not provide comprehensive dental care for adults enrolled in Medicaid (KanCare).

To help promote adult dental services in the KanCare program, please contact Oral Health Kansas at [info@oralhealthkansas.org](mailto:info@oralhealthkansas.org).



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## Free Dental Care for Kids

For the month of February, Concorde Career College In Kansas City, Missouri, is providing free dental services to kids ages 1-18 through the [Give Kids A Smile Program](#).



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## UMKC Offers Free Dental Services

UMKC in Kansas City, Missouri is offering free dental care services to Kansas City residents. The services will be part of their dental exam boards in April. [Find out more information!](#)

**KanCare**-The contracts for the KanCare managed care organizations ended in December. This year, the state has the option to renew the contracts.

**Medicaid Expansion**-Kansas is one of twenty states not yet expanding Medicaid (KanCare). If passed, 150,000 Kansans would be insured. This continues to be a controversial topic among legislators.

**Scope of Authority and Practice**-In 2015, bills were introduced proposing changes in scope of practice for dental hygienists, massage therapists, practice registered nurses and mental health technicians. Although the bills did not pass, advocates will continue their efforts.

**E-Cigarettes**-HB 2109 was passed in 2015, which would tax e-cigarettes beginning July 1, 2016. E-cigarette retailers may again debate the law before goes into effect.

**Budget**-The state budget continues to face large deficits. In the 2016 Session, legislators will need to consider additional budget cuts, budget transfers, and revenue increases.

To read about more topics for 2016 and to see the lists of legislators on the House and Senate health and insurance committees, [click here](#) for KHI's issue brief.

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## Thirsty For Health Project Begins

My name is Kelly Rippel and I am excited to introduce myself as the new project manager with Oral Health



UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI-KANSAS CITY

## KMOM Volunteer Registration

Register to volunteer for Kansas Mission of Mercy (KMOM) on January 29-30. If you wish to volunteer, go to the [Kansas Dental Charitable Foundation](#) website to find out more!



January 29-30, 2016

## Drink Display

2016 is here! Reserve a drink display for this year as soon as you can. Our reservation slots fill up fast!

The drink display is free for you to use and shipping costs are reimbursed. To reserve a drink display, [email us!](#)



Kansas.

As a non-profit oral health advocacy and education organization, OHK recently was awarded a grant



from the Kansas Health Foundation named 'Thirsty for Health.' The main grant goal is to advocate for positive change by connecting school districts that are interested in encouraging access to clean drinking water and healthy drinking behaviors. This includes helping make water the drink of choice instead of just an alternative to sugary beverages like soda or energy drinks.

With funding being a constant concern for school districts, our commitment is to provide support through resources and network connections such as service centers in order to achieve these strategic goals. I am available for meeting in person or by phone, so if you are interested in learning more please feel free to contact me!

[krippel@oralhealthkansas.org](mailto:krippel@oralhealthkansas.org) or 785-235-6039.

## Less Juice, More Water

Cavities Get Around is a campaign initiative by Delta Dental of Colorado Foundation, was launched in 2014 to educate Colorado families on baby teeth, limiting sugary beverages and providing water at meals.

A recent study was given to 600 families to see if there was a reduction in sugary drinks and increase in drinking water.



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The results were impressive:

- 63% of respondents said their children regularly drink tap water, a 22-point increase from 2014. Most tap water in Colorado has fluoride, which helps prevent tooth decay.
- The perception of juice as a healthy beverage for young children declined dramatically; 43% of respondents considered juice to be important to their child's health and nutritional needs this year-down 29 points since 2014.
- Juice consumption among young children is down 19 percentage points from 66% in 2014 to 47% today.
- The percentage of parents who considered baby teeth "less important" than adult teeth decreased significantly-from 21% in 2014 to 15% today.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) says drinking fluoridated water keeps the teeth strong and reduced tooth decay by approximately 25% in children and adults. By preventing tooth decay, community water fluoridation has been shown to save money, both for families and the health care system.



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