



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.

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Inauguration Day And A Medicare Priority

Today is Inauguration Day in the United States. While we all paused to watch the transition of power, Oral Health Kansas took note of the fact that Medicare dental benefits were a part of the election platform of President Biden. [This story](#) from National Public Radio shared how Biden's administration would like to "make

dental, vision and hearing coverage standard issue in traditional Medicare. Currently, most Medicare beneficiaries have to buy a supplemental policy to add on those benefits.” Oral Health Kansas supports adding dental benefits to the Medicare program because all people deserve to have access to a comprehensive set of health care services in their retirement years. We look forward to advocating with our Congressional delegation and the new administration for dental benefits in the Medicare program.



Unmet Dental Needs In Kansas

In Kansas, nonelderly adults who are Hispanic, any Race, are nearly two times more likely to not have dental insurance than non-Hispanic Blacks or non-Hispanic Whites (63.8 percent, 33.2 percent and 32.2 percent, respectively). These findings are from a collaboration between Oral Health Kansas and Kansas Health Institute report, *Dental Insurance Coverage And Unmet Dental*

Needs In Kansas.

Overall, 64.0 percent of Kansans reported having dental insurance at the time of the Kansas and Missouri Consumer Health Access Survey (KMHS) leaving nearly one million (999,845) Kansans without dental insurance coverage. About nine in 10 (85.9 percent) Kansans reported that they or their children did not have unmet dental needs in the prior year, but more than a third (34.8 percent) reported not having had a dental visit in the prior year. Click [here](#) to view the findings of the report.



Is COVID19 Making Your Teeth Hurt?

Dentists are finding patients are coming in with teeth pain or cracked teeth due to teeth grinding and clenching. According to an American Dental Association poll of its members, the pandemic has given rise to a 59 percent increase in teeth grinding and clenching (or bruxism), a 53 percent increase in chipped and cracked teeth, and a 53 percent increase in pain and compromised movement of the jaw and surrounding muscles, known as temporomandibular disorder (TMD).

There are ways to help you stop grinding your teeth. If you find yourself clenching your teeth, take a deep breath and relax your jaw. If you feel that you are clenching at night, you may consider using a mouth guard. Does slouching affect your jaw? Yes! Many of us slouch but do not realize our jaws protrude forward which causes our teeth to touch. If you are having difficulty, you may talk to your dentist for ideas. [Read more](#) about this story in the article by AARP.



Upcoming Events

As we try to keep you informed on national and state news, here are a list of webinars and events that may be of interest to you.

- The Oral Health Progress and Health Equity Network (OPEN) is hosting a 2021 Policy Summit on February 9-11. Find out more [here](#).
- Kansas Council on Developmental Disabilities (KCDD) is hosting listening tours beginning tomorrow. Click [here](#) for more information.



This month we are happy to welcome a new member on the Oral Health Kansas Board of Directors. Debra Meisenheimer joins the board. She was a member of the [ninth Dental Champions class](#), and she recently retired from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas as a Senior Professional



Relations Representative for over 34 years. In her role, she worked with dental offices on contracts, reimbursement, and educational issues. As a Dental Champion, she dedicated herself to improving oral health for Kansas children, and we are excited to welcome her to our board where she will help us advocate and improve oral health across the state



Sugary Drink Display Sanitation

Out of an abundance of caution, we are suspending use of the Sugary Drink Display until further notice.



During this time, hand washing and social distancing is on everyone's mind. We want everyone to have the comfort of knowing we sanitize our sugary drink displays. They are wiped down and cleaned off after they have been returned.

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Oral Health Kansas • 712 S. Kansas Ave., Suite 412 Topeka, KS 66603
785.235.6039 phone • 785.233.5564 fax info@oralhealthkansas.org
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