



# ORAL HEALTH KANSAS

ADVOCACY • PUBLIC AWARENESS • EDUCATION

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## Dental Champions Corner

Congratulations to Allison Lesko (Class 7) for presenting at the Kansas Chapter of American Academy of Pediatrics conference last week on Salina's Fluoride Campaign! Also, thank you to Amy Seery (Class 7) for assisting with our OHK booth!



## Dental Care: Needs Unmet

## The Time for Medicaid Expansion is Now

Oral Health Kansas is one of many consumer advocacy organizations that has been calling on Kansas policymakers to expand Medicaid. The Affordable Care Act (ACA) allows states to expand their Medicaid programs to low-income adults who are too poor to qualify for subsidies through the exchanges. In Kansas, that is adults who have incomes below 138% of the poverty level who do not have disabilities and who do not have children.

The ACA covers 100% of the cost of the expansion population through 2016, and then phases in a cost-sharing rate of 90% federal dollars and 10% state dollars by 2020. By any stretch of the imagination, a 90-10 cost-sharing rate is an excellent return on investment.

The people who would qualify for Medicaid through this program are the working poor. They work in food service, patient care, retail, landscaping, and janitorial service. They frequently are offered too few hours to qualify for an

A recent [study](#) shows 20.1% of insured adults forgo dental care because of affordability. The proportion of insured adults who cannot afford dental care is higher among those whose coverage was not provided by their employers, at 23.0% of adults with private, nongroup coverage and 34.9% of adults insured with public coverage, the survey showed.



## Consumer Guide

Kansas Advocates for Better Care (KABC) has developed a [consumer guide](#) to help Kansans understand their due rights under the Kansas Medicaid program, KanCare. The guide highlights the most commonly asked questions about challenging decisions made by the managed care organizations regarding members' long term supports and services plans of care.



## Drink Display

We've had fantastic feedback

employer-sponsored health plan, if a health plan is available. This group of people has to live day to day hoping there will not be a health or an oral health crisis that can send them to the emergency room. According to the [Kansas Hospital Association](#), only 18.2% of the Kansans eligible for Medicaid expansion are unemployed.

Last week, Oral Health Kansas sent a [letter](#) to Governor Brownback urging him to work with legislative leaders to expand the Kansas Medicaid program, known as KanCare. We believe Kansas tax dollars should stay in the state to care for our residents, rather than be sent to other states that have expanded their Medicaid programs. The Kansas Hospital Association has estimated Medicaid expansion would add \$3 billion to our state's economy and add as many as 4,000 jobs. Expanding KanCare will allow Kansas businesses to establish economic growth through a healthier workforce, while taking the necessary step toward meeting the health care needs of all Kansans.

The [KHI News Service](#) this week referred to the Medicaid expansion debate in Kansas as sparking a "war of words" after a member of the Governor's staff called Medicaid expansion a ruse, saying that Medicaid expansion would prioritize the expansion population over the current Medicaid population. The existing KanCare program will continue to provide health care for people with disabilities, low-income children and elderly Kansans. Medicaid expansion will do the same for low-income adults. A war of words over the basic issue of getting health and dental care to low-income Kansans does not help the situation. Kansans need care, and it is time to end the debate. Oral Health Kansas believes expanding KanCare is

and reviews on our drink display! This is a fun and easy way to show how much sugar is in each beverage. If you want to reserve it for your organization or event, [email us](#).

We currently have slots open in November! Shipping is reimbursed by Oral Health Kansas.



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the right thing to do for Kansans and for the Kansas economy. Please join us in asking Governor Brownback and members of the Kansas Legislature to expand KanCare now in order to provide health care and preventive dental care to our hard-working, low-income neighbors.

## Health Disparities in America

Last month, the Congressional Black Caucus Health Braintrust released the [2015 Kelly Report on Health Disparities in America](#), an official Congressional analysis of the state of African American health in the U.S. that offers a blueprint for reversing negative health trends in communities of color.

The Kelly Report brings together Members of Congress, medical professionals and public health thought leaders to examine the root causes and impact of health disparities in America and provide a comprehensive set of legislative and policy recommendations to address them. Compiled by CBC Health Braintrust Chair Dr. Robin Kelly, the report is a call-to-action for Congress to make improving health outcomes in diverse communities a top priority.

Although oral health care in the United States has improved, economic barriers continue to exist. Medicaid-enrolled children in some states are currently receiving dental care at a rate equivalent to those covered by private insurance. But adult dental insurance in Medicaid programs (KanCare in Kansas) fail to provide adequate care to adults.

The report states: Economic, geographic, cultural and language barriers continue

to impede too many people-especially racial and ethnic minorities-from attaining good oral health. Change is possible, but not until we as a nation commit to it.

At our Oral Health Kansas Conference next month, we will talk about health disparities, understanding social gradients in addressing health inequalities and what barriers underserved communities in your area are facing.

## Oral Health Kansas Conference

Want to learn more about health equity and improving oral health care for all?  
[Register](#) for our conference!

Our Keynote Speaker, Christie Custodio-Lumsden, PhD, MS, RD, CDN, Associate Research Scientist at the Columbia University College of Dental Medicine Dr. Lumsden will discuss current health disparities people face and offer new perspectives on policy and education interventions to ensure all people have equitable access to good oral health. She will share the social determinants of health and how gaining an understanding of social gradients is critical to understanding and making plans to address health and oral health inequalities.

We will have a panel of experts working in underserved communities discuss the barriers members of their communities face in accessing health and oral health care:

- Mollie Day, DDS, Health Partnership Clinic of Johnson

County

- Nicole Rogers, DDS, Rogers Family Dentistry
- Broderick Crawford, New Bethel Church

Check out our [website](#) for more information!



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