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Dental Care and the Definition of Middle Class

USA Today recently posted an article titled "7 things the middle class can't afford anymore." This included expenditures such as new vehicles, retirement savings, and dental care.

Oral Health Kansas Joins Tobacco Prevention Coalition

Oral Health Kansas recently joined the Kansans for a Healthy Future (K4HF) coalition, formed around the singular mission of tobacco prevention. The American Heart Association along with the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, Inc., the American Lung Association, the Kansas Health Foundation, the Kansas Health Consumer Coalition, Health Care Foundation of Greater Kansas City and the Tobacco Free Kansas Coalition are also partners of this effort.

What Will the Coalition Do?

Kansas has not raised the cigarette tax in over a decade and the tax on other tobacco products has never been raised since its inception in 1972. At the same time that tobacco products are inexpensive, our health outcomes are declining and it is time to reverse this trend. An increase in tobacco tax is one of the best proven ways to stop kids from picking up the deadly habit and to encourage current smokers to kick the habit.



According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, "the U.S. spends about \$64 billion each year on oral health care - just 4% is paid by Government programs." About 108 million people in the U.S. have no dental coverage. [Read the full article here.](#)

Strategies in Public Health Webinar

Join the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) on December 5th from 12 p.m. - 1 p.m. ET for a webinar titled [New Public Health Strategies: Delivering the Promise.](#)



Panelists will discuss innovations in public health



K4HF advocates increasing Kansas's cigarette tax by \$1.50 per pack, with a parallel increase on other tobacco products, which would raise nearly \$113 million for the state. It could also save the state \$196 million in long-term health care costs. Most importantly however, an increase in the tobacco tax would save lives! It would prevent an estimated 61,000 kids from becoming addicted adults and would result in a 20 percent decrease in youth tobacco use.

The coalition is collecting stories now!

[TAKE ACTION - Join the movement! Do you have an interest in tobacco prevention? Have you, a family member or someone you know been personally impacted by tobacco use? Follow this link to reach out to us. We would love to hear from you!](#)

"Enormous opportunity to expand dental coverage to millions of families"

The Children's Dental Health Project (CDHP) recently published a [blog post](#) that addresses the number of people who have elected to purchase insurance under the Affordable Care Act (ACA). In the blog, Colin Reusch, CHDP Senior Policy Analyst, points to the bigger issue: dental coverage often is overlooked as a vital component of health care.

Colin pointed out, "The ACA is an enormous opportunity to expand dental coverage to millions of

and findings from the Public Health Leadership Forum's report. Be a part of the conversation on twitter with the hashtag #RWJF1stFri.

[Learn more here!](#)

Are You Ready for Fluoride?

Kansas communities are facing challenges to their community water fluoridation (CWF) programs. Sometimes the community knows it is coming, other times, the challenge is a surprise. Help us be ready for fluoride by completing this quick [readiness assessment](#).



Traveling Sugary Drink Display

Reserve our traveling Sugary Drink Display for your business or event! Reservations are made for one month at a time.



families who would otherwise be unable to afford it." He added, "More than 1 million Americans have selected dental coverage on the federally-run marketplaces alone; this demonstrates the demand for dental benefits."

Enacted in 2010, the ACA marks the largest commitment in our nation's history to dental coverage for children. This commitment is recognition of the fact that oral health is a critical component of overall health.

Learn more about how to access health insurance in Kansas at www.insureks.org. Specific details about the Kansas marketplace and open enrollment are available on the [Cover Kansas brochure](#).

To see Colin's presentation on Accessing Oral Health through Insurance Coverage from last month's Oral Health Kansas Conference, [click here](#).



Advocates pay tribute to long-time UMHMF staff member



This week, advocates, policymakers, and foundation leaders paid tribute to Virginia Elliott on the occasion of her retirement from the United Methodist Health Ministry Fund. Virginia has served as a program officer and Vice President at UMHMF for the past 17 years. During that time, she has been a mentor,

Return postage is covered by Oral Health Kansas. [E-mail Sarah here](#) if you would like to make reservation.

a teacher, and a visionary leader to countless individuals and organizations. Virginia has served as Oral Health Kansas' program officer for over 10 years, and her patient guidance, wisdom and insight have had a profound impact on our work. We join with our colleagues across the state in wishing Virginia well and thanking her for her hard work and dedication.

If you have an idea, story or suggestion for a Oral Health Kansas Weekly Wednesday Update please contact us at info@oralhealthkansas.org.

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