



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](#).

February 17, 2021

Volume 12, Issue 7



Productive Virtual Congressional Visits

Last week Oral Health Kansas staff participated in the [OPEN](#) network’s virtual “Hill Day.” Tanya Dorf Brunner and Christi Wells had meetings with Congressman Tracey Mann and the staff of Senator Jerry Moran and Congressmen Ron Estes and Jacob LaTurner.

We discussed the need for a Medicare dental benefit and new legislation that would add dental coverage to Medicare Part B. We thanked the delegation for Congressional support of increased funding for Medicaid through COVID relief funding. The funding increases the

federal government's share of the cost of Medicaid. It is an important way of help state governments meet the healthcare needs of state residents while state revenues are down due to the pandemic, and it has been a big benefit in the Kansas budget since last year.

Finally, we discussed the opportunity for Congress to appropriate money to support Centers for Disease Control (CDC) funding for every state oral health office in the country. The Kansas Department of Health and Environment has an oral health grant from the CDC, but our state is one of only 20 that has such a grant. An additional \$15 million from the federal government would ensure all 50 states have federal grants to support an oral health office.

We were pleased with the conversations with all four members of our delegation and their interest in each of the issues we discussed. If you would like to connect with your member of Congress and discuss any of these issues, please contact us at info@oralhealthkansas.org for more information and help in setting up meetings or sending messages.



African Americans Risk For High Blood Pressure

During Black History Month, we are bringing awareness to the risks of high blood pressure in African Americans. According to the [American Heart Association \(AHA\)](#), more than 40 percent of non-Hispanic African American men and women have high blood pressure and African

Americans ages 35-64 years are 50% more likely to have high blood pressure than whites. High blood pressure (or hypertension) medicines may also cause oral/dentofacial adverse effects by causing dry mouth. Taking care of your gums and teeth can help with a healthy blood pressure. A [study](#) published in the American Heart Association journal shows that treatment for high blood pressure may not be as effective in patients with gum disease as it would in patients with good oral health. As stated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, it has also been recently found having high blood pressure may increase the risk of severe illness from COVID-19.

Marketplace Special Enrollment Period

Due to the exceptional circumstances and rapidly changing Public Health Emergency (PHE) impacting millions of people throughout the US every day, many Americans remain uninsured or underinsured and still need affordable health coverage. From February 15, 2021 and through May 15, 2021, be open for a Special Enrollment Period. Typically



enrollment in the ACA Marketplace closes in December, but the Biden administration is opening it again for all Marketplace-eligible consumers who are submitting a new application or updating an existing application.

You can find out more information about the Special Enrollment [here](#). Learn more about how to select dental care in the Marketplace from [Oral Health Kansas and our national partners](#).



Tobacco Treatment Specialist Training

The University of Kansas has developed a Tobacco Treatment Specialist Training accredited by the Council for Tobacco Treatment Training Programs. They are currently recruiting for the Spring 2021 session. Their goal is to increase the number and reach of Tobacco

Treatment Specialists in Kansas.

The upcoming TTS training program consists of:

- An online training that takes 14-18 hours to complete
- Interim quizzes and a final exam
- Required one-day virtual skills building workshop
- National as well as Kansas-specific treatment resources

The application deadline is Sunday, February 21. Learn more information [here](#).



Promoting Oral Health To Families

The [Office of Head Start](#) is promoting oral health to families this month for National Children's Dental Health month. Maintaining good oral habits at home is always important, but especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Children still need to brush their teeth two

times a day and floss. [Here](#) is a fun video reminder to brush your teeth! And please remind children (and yourself) not to snack on sugary drinks all day long. #ASTDD



Upcoming Events

- The DentaQuest Partnership for Oral Health Advancement and the American Public Health Association (APHA) will present a webinar on social determinants of oral health (SDOH), February 25, 12 pm CST. Register [here](#).
- Breaking Down Barriers to Care: Treating Patients with Disabilities. An overview of seizure disorders along with recommended treatment modalities will be presented. February 18, 5pm - 6pm. Click [here](#) to sign up.
- An interactive training on telemedicine for Kansas families who have children with disabilities and/or special health care needs. Two dates are March 16 and April 15. Click [here](#) for more information.
- The Future of Rural Healthcare in Kansas listening tours. Hosted by United Methodist Health Ministry Fund, Kansas Health Foundation and Kansas Hospital Association. Click [here](#) for more information.
- Accelerating Health Equity, March 16-18, 2021, hosted by AHA Community Health Improvement (ACHI) and the Institute for Diversity and Health Equity (IFDHE). Click [here](#) to register.



We hope everyone has been able to stay warm and safe, despite the frigid temperatures. For most, we were unprepared for the temperature lows. We wanted to thank the crews who

have been out in this cold weather, making sure we have restored power. Also, to the first responders who have been working long hours as well. The weather circumstances have been difficult and it gives us a sense of appreciation for what we are accustomed to.



Photo courtesy of:
the American Public Power Association



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.

Follow Us



Oral Health Kansas • 712 S. Kansas Ave., Suite 414 ABTopeka, KS 66603
785.235.6039 phone • 785.233.5564 fax info@oralhealthkansas.org
Copyright 2021