



# ORAL HEALTH KANSAS

ADVOCACY • PUBLIC AWARENESS • EDUCATION

Volume 6, Issue 10  
2015

March 11,

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## Advocate for Medicaid expansion in Kansas

Help advocate for Medicaid expansion in Kansas by **signing this petition** from ChangeKansas.



## Children's Dental Health Grant Opportunity

The **ADA Foundation** is accepting applications for the Samuel D. Harris Fund for Children's Dental

## Hearings on Medicaid Expansion Next Week

The proponents of Medicaid expansion will testify before the House Health and Human Services Committee next Wednesday, March 18. Oral Health Kansas will submit written testimony, and the opponents testify March 19th. The state's health advocates are encouraging as many people as possible to attend the hearings and show support for this policy change. Calling and emailing legislators records your support and may motivate them to action.

In concert with other health advocates, Oral Health Kansas is collecting stories from Kansans about the need for expansion and the positive changes it could bring to individual lives. Please **send your stories here** by this Friday, March 13th.



Health. The grant program is named for noted pediatric dentist and philanthropist Dr. Samuel D. Harris who passed away in 2003 and is designed to bestow grants on organizations dedicated to fighting children's dental disease. for prenatal and postnatal oral health instruction for agencies that sponsor new parents and caregivers to reduce the incidence of early childhood caries. There will be 23 grants available of up to \$5000 each. The grant deadline is April 10th. This grant and other grants can be viewed [here](#).

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## Tobacco Cessation Training Event Tomorrow!

Learn how to make tobacco cessation part of regular health care practice tomorrow Thursday, March 12 from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. For more information or to register visit [www.kumc.edu/AHECcalendar](http://www.kumc.edu/AHECcalendar).



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## Traveling Sugary Drink Display

Don't forget to reserve our traveling sugary drink display for your event! Our display shows how much sugar is in a variety of your favorite drinks, emphasizing which drinks are good and bad for you.

Governor Brownback recently softened his position on Medicaid expansion, indicating there is a chance he would sign a bill approving Medicaid expansion. Read more in this story from the [Kansas Health Institute News Service](#).

## Johnson County Community Forum

Oral Health Kansas completed their first round of community forums, wrapping up with a breakfast in Olathe (Johnson County) on March 10. About 20 people came out bright and early to discuss the issues that matter in their community. Many remarked on the progress that specific programs to screen, treat and educate very young children and their families have had on the declining rates of decay in that population. The school screening and sealant programs, supported by the area dental safety net clinics, also got props for positively impacting dental health.

The majority of the conversation focused on the county's clear need: oral health services for elders, especially those living in congregate settings. The challenges around transportation, payment, and lack of caregiver awareness of or initiative around daily oral care are systemic. Some programs are working to address these issues, but they can only make a small difference in a broken system. The challenge around educating KanCare beneficiaries about the available preventive dental services was also a topic of conversation. More navigators are needed to talk with people about what they might access and how they could make a difference in overall oral health of the population.

## Tobacco Tax Increase Myths vs. Facts

Mixed in with misconceptions and concerns about an increase in the tobacco tax, there are unarguable truths that are based on science and years' worth of data. In order to make the best decision for our state, it is



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critically important to decipher myth from fact. Below are some common myths about this tax increase.

**MYTH:** A tobacco price increase will drive consumers across the border to purchase these items, particularly in Missouri where the tobacco tax is significantly lower.

**FACT:** There is no evidence to support this claim. In fact, all of the states bordering Missouri have increased the tobacco tax and all are enjoying significant revenue increases.

**MYTH:** Tobacco price increases are an unpredictable source of revenue.

**FACT:** Tobacco price increases are one of the most predictable, stable sources of revenue while simultaneously driving down consumption and the corresponding health costs that result from decreased use.

**MYTH:** Kansas's last tobacco increase in 2003 was unsuccessful.

**FACT:** Cigarette tax revenues increased by \$72 million while sales of cigarettes declined by 26%. Adult smoking prevalence fell from 22.2% before the tax increase to 20.4% in the second year of the tax increase, an 8% decline in the number of adult smokers.

When you separate myth from facts, it's clear to see that an increase in the tobacco tax is a Win/Win opportunity for Kansas - lives and money will be saved!

Read more about the the benefits of this tobacco tax increase on the [American Heart Association's facts page](#).

**TAKE ACTION - Help us educate and clear up tobacco tax myths by using this link to send a letter to your lawmaker!**

[Forward this email](#)



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