

ORAL HEALTH KANSAS

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March is Developmental Disabilities Month. We would like to recognize Kathleen Elder, RDH, ECP II, COM and Kathryn Trilli, RDH, ECP II, M.Ed. who have provided dental hygiene screening, fluoride varnish, and toothbrushing supplies to children at Cleft Clip/Cleft Palate Clinics for over five years. Kathleen provides her services at the Sutherland Institute for Cleft Lift Palate serving at KUMC in Kansas City, and Kathy serves at Wichita's Plastic Surgery Center.

Legislative News: schools, taxes, tobacco, and Medicaid expansion

This week, the Kansas Legislature returned to work after their week-long break. They returned to the news that the Kansas Supreme Court ruled last week that the school finance formula does not adequately fund schools. The Legislature must re-write the school finance formula by June 30, 2016. Lawmakers may need to appropriate as much as \$500 million more to ensure schools are funded adequately. This is in addition to the current year state budget deficit of about \$280 million. While the Supreme Court's decision was not a surprise for most Statehouse observers, it did cement the reality that the state budget deficit is larger than ever.

On Tuesday, March 7, the Kansas Senate roundly rejected Governor Brownback's tax plan, which relied on tobacco and liquor taxes and on delaying state payments. Just before last week's

Their care of children and their dental education information for the families are part of OHK's partnership with Kansas Department of Health and Environment Special Health Care Needs Office.



Kathleen Elder

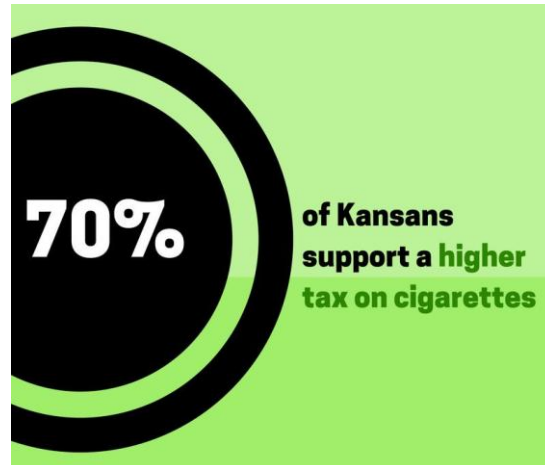


Kathy Trilli

PIT Crew revs up

On March 8, two dozen people gathered in Topeka for the first meeting of the new "PIT Crew." The group is exploring ways to improve the oral health of pregnant women, infants and toddlers. Representatives from insurance companies, dental and health organizations, and early childhood advocates took part in the working group's first meeting to determine strategies Kansas can use to improve the oral health of pregnant women and children birth to three.

break, legislators failed to override a veto of their plan to reverse most of the 2012 income tax cuts. Rejection of the Governor's tax plan this week means the Legislature will need to come to an agreement on a new plan to fund the state's budget and fill the budget deficit.



#DollarsAndSense4KS 

This week, the #DollarsAndSense4KS coalition, of which Oral Health Kansas is a member, [released the results of a new poll](#) that showed 70 percent of Kansans support increasing tobacco taxes to help balance the state budget. The Governor has proposed a \$1.00 per pack of cigarette increase, and the #DollarsAndSense4KS is promoting a \$1.50 per pack increase. An increase at this level would prevent as many as 16,200 Kansas youth from becoming adult smokers and prompt 20,000 adults to quit. The poll showed that 76 percent of respondents are worried about tobacco use among young people, and if the \$1.50 increase could prevent youth from starting, it would be effective.



Reserve a sugary drink display now!

We have a limited amount of drink displays available this month. Reserving yours ahead of time is crucial. [Sign up now!](#)

Our sugary drink display contains 10 popular beverages and shows how much sugar is in each. The display is free to use, up to a month and we reimburse postage.



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Oral Health Kansas long has been a proponent of creating "other tobacco products" tax parity. The last time Kansas raised the tax on other tobacco products, which includes chewing tobacco and cigars, in 1972, and our tax rate on these products is nearly the lowest in the nation. Seventy-eight percent of voters in the poll support creating other tobacco products tax parity.

FEDERAL AID LOST



The Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee will hold hearings on Medicaid expansion on March 20 and 21. As the hearing date approaches, please contact your state Senator and share your support for Medicaid expansion. The state has forfeited over \$1.7 billion so far by not expanding our Medicaid program to low-income, working adults.

Staff attends Kansas Division of Early Childhood conference

On March 2, Kathy Hunt and Doug Bowman attended the annual conference

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for the Kansas Division of Early Childhood - Council for Exceptional Children in Wichita. Of the 230 early childhood professionals who attended, 126 stopped by our table and visited with us about oral health in their agencies and communities.

One topic of discussion that most were interested in was the inclusion of an oral health screening whenever any developmental screening occurs. This is the concept being piloted in Butler County by their oral health coalition. Want to know more? Contact [Doug Bowman!](#)



Kathy visits with a conference attendee

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