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Oral health community forums kick off

Our first community forum this year was held at a public library in Johnson County on April 13. A diverse group attended and had a productive conversation about tax policy, oral health education, and Medicaid dental services for adults.

Senator Barbara Bollier (R-Mission Hills) attended and told the group, "Grassroots efforts matter." She urged the attendees to pay attention to policy matters that extend beyond oral health, as tax policy and other health policy issues work together to affect the progress we are able to make in achieving meaningful oral health policy.

The series of community forums continues this month! Forums were held in Colby on April 18 and Wichita on April 29. On Thursday, April 20 we will be at the Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library at 10 am!

RSVP to
attended the summit held at the Kansas Leadership Center, where experts from across the country spoke about workplace health and benefits for employees. Kelly shared the Thirsty for Health project’s work to increase access to and consumption of water in K-12 schools. This was an opportunity to showcase how employers could adopt a similar water access project as well as support local school districts’ plans to improve their water access infrastructure.

Seeking Policy Director!

OHK is seeking a full-time Policy Director. The position plays a lead role in promoting the Oral Health Kansas public policy priorities to legislators and other policymakers. The Policy Director also is responsible for managing the DentaQuest Foundation-funded “Kansas Oral Health Connections” grant project, including extensive stakeholder engagement activities. Experience with grant-writing and reporting is required. Previous experience working for a nonprofit organization is preferred.

For a full job description, visit our website!

Applications received by April 10, 2023

dbowman@oralhealthkansas.org or call 785-235-6039. Share our flyer!

Another successful event for Brush, Book, Bed project

Last week OHK staff Doug Bowman and Marcia Manter along with Shawnee County Oral Health Coalition leader Carolyn Weinhold attended a Parents as Teacher's Dental Fair in Topeka that was held in conjunction with the Brush, Book, Bed (BBB) project. BBB is a program that focuses on families of young children that blends three essential healthy activities - brushing teeth each night before bed, reading a book to the child and putting the child to bed at an hour appropriate for the child's age.

Oral Health Kansas and Shawnee
Dental coverage for kids really does matter!

In a recent survey of US parents, results showed that children without dental insurance were twice as likely as insured kids to have had a recent toothache or dental problem that affected their ability to eat, sleep or concentrate in school. The study's organizers at the Children's Dental Health Project concluded that when kids are insured, they are more likely to go to the dentist.

A recent Journal of the American Dental Association study demonstrated similar results. The study found that uninsured children had the fewest dental appointments and their parents were most likely to report unmet dental health needs due to cost.

County Oral Health Coalition started the program in 2016 in partnership with three Shawnee County Home Visiting programs: Community Action Early Head Start, USD 345 Seaman Parents as Teachers and USD 501 Topeka Parents as Teachers.

During last week's event, Holly Blick, RDH ECP II with Grace Med in Topeka and Jodi Schupe, RHD, ECP II on staff at Ted Jowett Family Dentistry, provided dental screenings to 18 children. They also taught parents how to spot dental decay, applied fluoride varnish and recommended the children visit a dental office.

Staff shared our sugary drink display, an exhibit featuring healthy and unhealthy foods, and a tooth brushing demonstration using a Magic Dragon puppet.

A'jay is talking to the family about healthy and unhealthy food choices
Our sugary drink display contains 10 popular beverages and shows how much sugar is in each. We also include some of our Tips and Tricks handouts and mirror clings! The display is free to use, up to a month and we reimburse postage!

It's people such as Veronica, A'jay and Carolyn that make a difference in our communities!

T-21 passes in Garden City

Congratulations to the health advocates in Garden City on their successful advocacy to pass a city ordinance this week to increase the age to purchase tobacco products from 18 to 21. Garden City joins twelve other communities in Kansas by approving an ordinance help prevent kids from starting to use tobacco products.

The advocacy in Garden City was student-led. Click here to watch a video of the high school students presenting to the Garden City Commission.