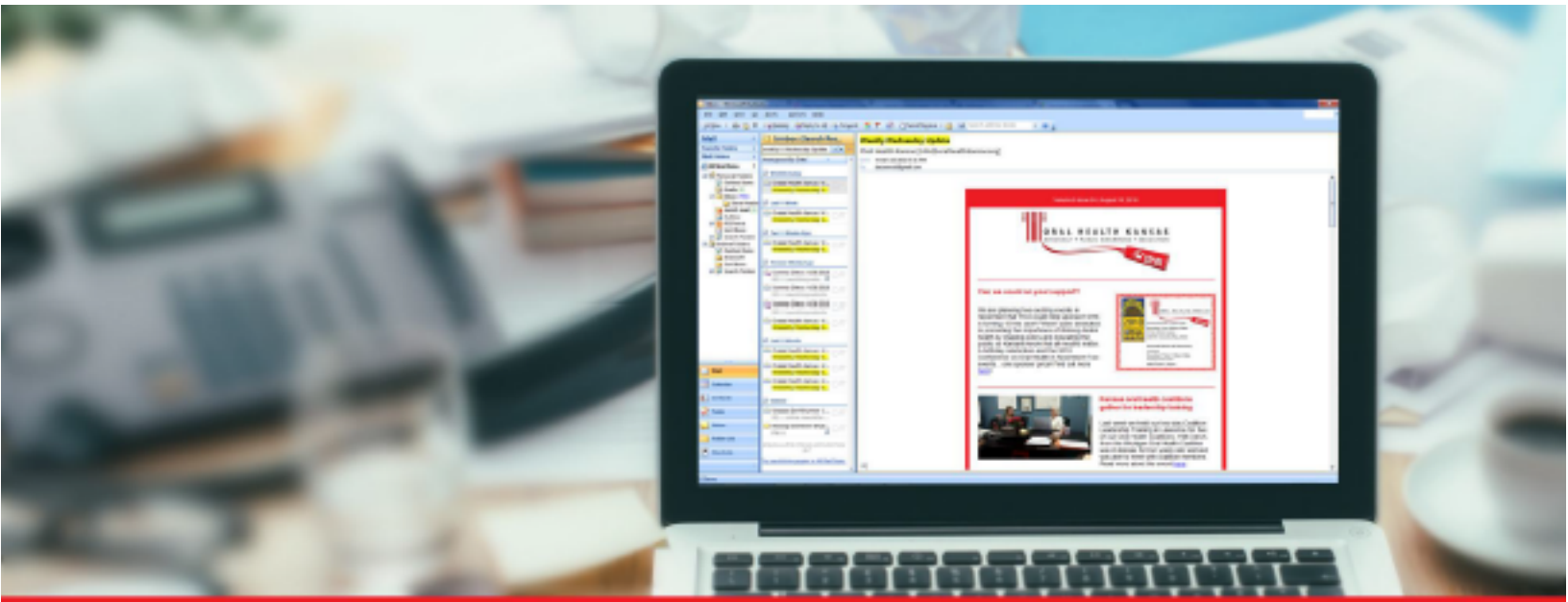




**ORAL HEALTH KANSAS**  
ADVOCACY • PUBLIC AWARENESS • EDUCATION



## 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](#).

April 20, 2022

Volume 13, Issue 16

### It's Official!

This morning, Kansas Governor Laura Kelly signed the state budget bill which included funding to extend dental benefits to adults enrolled in the state's Medicaid program! This means that later this year all Kansans who rely on KanCare for their health insurance will also have access to dental benefits, including both preventive and restorative care.



While the governor’s signature is just the first step, Oral Health Kansas and our partners will be working alongside the Kansas Division of Health Care Finance on the implementation and roll out of these new benefits. We will share more information throughout the process and as it becomes available.

Securing funding for an adult dental benefit in Medicaid took the tireless work and support of health advocates across Kansas over many, many years. Thank you to all who helped make this a reality! We would not be here without the help of advocates like you!



## Save the Date!

We are excited to announce the dates for the 2022 Conference on Oral Health! The conference will begin with a reception on the evening of Thursday, November 3 for Dental Champions Alumni and a full day conference Friday, November 4. The conference will be a hybrid event and we will be in person at the [Kansas State Olathe Campus](#). We will keep you updated as we continue planning!



Caswell Evans, DDS, MPH  
Picture courtesy of Illinois Chicago

## OHK Works on Tackling Racism

“Silence about and lack of attention and consideration for anti-racism advocacy by oral health proponents supports racism and its acidic effects. If dental public health advocates fail to speak out and provide leadership regarding antiracism, what other entity in oral health domain will? If not us, who? If not now, when?”

Dr. Caswell Evans

OHK staff and board members have been participating in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) trainings since 2021. Our goal is to understand what we can do as individuals and a team to bring attention to oral health disparities and racial inequities. We will ensure DEI is baked into all OHK workplans,

publications, convenings, and advocacy activities. Now is the time to take action to improve health care access for populations who have been systemically underserved in our state and our country.

Thank you to the Health Forward Foundation for providing us with the support to work on such an imperative issue.



## Thank You to our Volunteers

This week is National Volunteer Week and we wanted to give a big thank you to the Shawnee County Oral Health Coalition members and our OHK Board of Directors.

Since 2015, the Shawnee County Oral Health Coalition members have worked on activities to bring oral health education to Topeka families through the Brush, Book, Bed project. The coalition meets quarterly and invites a guest speaker from the community. If you would like to learn more about the coalition or how you can get involved, email us at [info@oralhealthkansas.org](mailto:info@oralhealthkansas.org).

Also thank you to our 14 member OHK Board of Directors for your leadership and commitment to OHK. We look forward to the opportunities OHK has been given and your continued guidance through our work.

We also wanted to thank former board member, Lissa Staley, for facilitating our Thirsty for Health focus groups in March and April. Lissa played a significant role in our focus groups and had the ability to engage with families about the importance of water and make it exciting to talk about!



## NOHC Great Success!

OHK Board Member, Dr. Melanie Simmer-Beck, and staff member Kathy Hunt attended this year's National Oral Health Conference last week in Fort Worth, Texas. This is the nation's premier public health conference around the topic of oral health. After two years of virtual meetings, it was a pleasure to renew acquaintances, attend sessions, and have all those wonderful hallway conversations that lead to great new ideas for our state. There were a wide

variety of topics covered, but many of the sessions focused on medical, dental, and mental health integration as well as racism and health equity.

One of the most celebrated speakers at our conference last year, Dr. Eleanor Fleming, gave an eloquent presentation on racism and oral health this year at the National Oral Health Conference.



## Upcoming Events

- OPEN's New Health Equity Curriculum: Get Involved!  
WHEN: Tuesday, April 26th  
2:00-2:30 PM CST. Click [here](#) to register!
- **Save the Date!** 16th Kansas Disability Caucus on August 10th-12th. Click [here](#) for details.
- 2022 Conference on Oral Health: Thursday, November 3

and Friday, November 4.



Congratulations to former Oral Health Kansas Board Chair Dr. Brian Smith on running in the Boston Marathon this week! Brian is the Superintendent at the Columbus School District, and his students

threw a pep rally for him to get him ready. He's been training and working toward this goal for a long time, and we are proud of his accomplishment!





## 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



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