



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.

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Thirsty For Health Project

We know drinking water is a healthier choice instead of reaching for a sugary beverage. Sugary drinks are associated with weight gain, tooth decay and cavities. Water has many benefits to our health such as:

- Significantly affects energy levels and brain function
- Helps maximize physical performance
- Carrying nutrients and oxygen to your cells

During National Water Week, we want to share about a project we are working on, Thirsty for Health. OHK previously led a statewide project called Thirsty for Health to increase K-12 students' consumption of water. Now we are doing an extension to that project. We are currently partnering with the United School Administrators of Kansas and Community Action, Inc. in Topeka. The goal of the project is to introduce and enact policy in up to five school districts in Kansas that would ensure all newly constructed and renovated school buildings will have water bottle filling stations installed. We will target school districts to ensure the policy makes a difference for students who are often most negatively impacted by health disparities, poorly funded school programs, and high levels of junk food marketing. Bottle filling stations encourage students to choose water over sugary sweetened beverages, leading to improved health and cognitive functioning. Adequate water intake can positively impact children's cognitive performance, particularly short-term memory. Drinking water can also improve children's visual attention and fine motor skills

If you are interested in learning more or how to get involved, email us at info@oralhealthkansas.org



Inequities In Oral Health During The Covid Pandemic

CareQuest Intstitute for Oral Health, formally DentaQuest Partnership, took a look at disparities in oral health during the Covid pandemic. They found that over 74 million Americans lack access to dental coverage. [Research from DentaQuest Partnership in May 2020](#) showed that significant oral health

disparities make lower-income Americans and people of color more likely to have unmet dental needs.

- Black adults are 68% more likely to have an unmet dental need than white adults.
- Latino adults are 52% more likely than white adults to report having difficulty performing at work due to poor oral health.
- Nearly 4 in 10 Black and Latino adults reside in the 14 states where Medicaid's adult dental benefits cover either no dental services or cover emergency-only dental care

Discrimination was also a factor of inequities in health and oral health. Some of the findings were:

- People who reported discrimination experiences in their lifetime across a variety of factors, characteristics, and social environments were less likely to have a routine dental visit in the past 12 months.
- With every additional lifetime discrimination experience, participants were 6% less likely to have a routine dental visit.

- Respondents who had discrimination experiences across 4 or more items were 36% less likely to have had a routine dental visit in the past 12 months

Read more in the [issue brief](#) including information on the affect of the pandemic and dentistry.



Mental Health And Your Oral Health

People with orofacial pain (pain and/or dysfunction in the head and neck region) experienced higher levels of depression, anxiety, and psychological distress during the COVID-19 pandemic, according to a study published recently in Dental and Medical Problems.

According to an article in Dr. Bicuspid, “orofacial pain is often attributed to temporomandibular joint pain and tooth and jaw disorders, and it is one of the most common causes of chronic pain. Evidence has suggested that psychological distress coexists with chronic pain and that being exposed to pain may make depression worse. Therefore, the authors suspected that those with oral or facial pain may have experienced more stress, anxiety, and depression during COVID-19 lockdowns”.

Read the full article [here](#).



Upcoming Events

- 2021 Conference on Oral Health, presented by Oral Health Kansas, November 4 and 5. More information will be provided [here](#).
- Advocating for Change: Older Adults and OralHealth Care, a viewing and discussion of the Burr Foundation video Hidden Pain: America’s Oral Health Crisis, Tuesday, April 27 at 3pm CST. Click [here](#) to connect.
- CareQuest Institute is hosting a webinar: Oral Health, Primary Care, and the COVID-19 Pandemic on April 29, 12pm. Register [here](#).
- Kansas Mission of Mercy, July 23-24 in Wichita, Kansas. Find more information [here](#).



Congratulations to OHK Board Member and Dental Champions Member, Barbara Conant, for recently being appointed by Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt to the Elder and Dependent Adult Abuse Prevention Advisory Council. This council provides expert advice and



input to the Attorney General's office as they perform their duty to prevent, detect, investigate and prosecute the abuse of elder and dependent adults. We know Barb is the perfect advocate for this!



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.

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