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**From:** Oral Health Kansas [jparnell@oralhealthkansas.org]  
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**ORAL HEALTH KANSAS**  
*Weekly Wednesday Update*

*Our Mission:  
To improve oral health  
in Kansas through  
advocacy,  
public awareness  
and education.*

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**SAVE THE  
DATE**



ORAL HEALTH KANSAS

*A New  
Decade for  
Oral Health:*

## Children's Oral Health: The Role of the School Nurse

**By Chris Tuck, President of the Kansas School Nurse Organization**

School nurses are on the frontlines of children's health care and understand the importance of healthy teeth. They witness first-hand the consequences of poor oral health which include pain from a toothache, difficulty eating and speaking, and distraction from performing their schoolwork. They also see the frustration on parents' faces when they acknowledge the fact that they do not have the money to go to the dentist, nor insurance to assist with dental expenses.

Many children do not get the care they need because their families lack awareness of the importance of oral health and the need for early intervention. Keeping the mouth healthy is the pathway to keeping the entire body healthy, and school nurses play a key role in promoting oral health for students and families by providing education, promoting prevention, and coordinating and advocating care for students.

The school nurse is positioned to coordinate and integrate a successful oral health program which provides students and parents with the knowledge and tools they need to make good oral health decisions. Informed and motivated students and parents can prevent many oral health problems and lessen the long-term effects of existing ones.

**THINK BIG**

**2010  
Oral Health Kansas  
Conference**

*December  
2 & 3, 2010*

*Capitol  
Plaza Hotel*  
Topeka, Kansas

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Schools also should provide an environment conducive to healthy living and should include classroom instruction, treatment services, and emergency care or referral. School nurses do many things to promote the oral health of children and families, and here are some of their roles:

1) Advocate for-

- Healthy breakfast and lunch menus;
- Preventive school oral health programs to prevent and manage disease that include oral health education, and dental screenings;
- Care for students with unique dental needs, such as children with special health care needs.

2) Identify, Collaborate and Refer -

- To dental providers in the community who accept Medicaid or Children's Health Insurance Program coverage, or who have sliding scales based on income;
- To school nursing colleagues and teachers to be catalysts in promoting good oral health practices;
- To Community organizations and agencies to publicize and assist with program.

3) Educate & Prevention-

- Healthy nutrition choices and low or no sugar foods and drinks;
- Not sharing eating and drinking utensils and toothbrushes;
- Teaching and providing a venue for tooth brushing and/or flossing in school to reduce dental caries and gum disease;
- Using fluoride via toothpaste, rinses or varnishes;
- Oral health safety and safe school practices in all settings (physical education, team sports, etc), including mouth guards during contact sports activities;
- Seeing the dentist at least once or twice a year.

4) Direct Services -

- Intervening in dental emergencies;
- Assisting with and/or conducting oral health screenings.

Sound oral health is a vital aspect of a student's total health. A child with a toothache or mouth pain will not learn as effectively as a child without pain. Anything a school nurse does to help a student achieve better health makes an improvement in that child's life. School nurses' efforts are critical to setting the stage for a lifetime of health, learning and success.

Wednesday, May 12<sup>th</sup> is National School Nurse Day. Please join me in recognizing your school nurse for the advocacy, collaboration, education, injury prevention, and direct services he/she has provided the students and staff in your schools related to oral health. On this day of celebration, "thank" him/her for the great job that they do!

Here are examples of school nurses promoting oral health at their schools:



Children's Dental Health Month: Kathy Bailey, RN, USD #443 at Ross Elementary in Dodge City, created events for every grade: a visit to Dr. Richard Stein's dental office, oral health games and contests, classroom workshops on oral health care and eating habits, refrigerator magnets, and stickers. The school exhibited hallway displays of beverages and foods, demonstrating the amount of sugar in each. Kassandra Cruz, a 3<sup>rd</sup> grader, won the Kansas Dental Association Coloring Contest.

School Health Fair: Marlene Kohnmeier, RN, USD #345 in Topeka, included oral health in the students' health fair for 1<sup>st</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> graders. Students each received hands-on demonstrations of toothbrushing and flossing from a community dental hygienist.

Dental Education and Supplies: Melissa Ma, RN, BSN, USD #259 at Wilbur Middle School in Wichita provided dental education for the entire school population and distributed toothbrushes, floss and toothpaste to all students.

Dental Screenings: More than 400 school nurses have organized and implemented visual dental screening activities over the past two years through the School Screening Initiative which is intended to satisfy Kansas State Statute 72-5201. Many nurses such as Laurie Hermon, RN, USD #244, in Burlington ensured that every student in elementary and middle schools received an oral health screening. Joan Streck, RN, BSN, USD #211 in Norton, conducted dental screening for students by tapping into the services of community dental hygienists. Local dentists donated toothbrushes, toothpaste, activity books and stickers. Each grade participated in dental health education activities from American Dental Association.

For information about dental screenings in schools, please contact Caron Shipley, RDH, BSDH, Program Director, School Screening

Initiative, KDHE Bureau of Oral Health: [cshiple@kdheks.gov](mailto:cshiple@kdheks.gov)

## Parkinson's Disease and Oral Health- WEBINAR

On May 16 at 10 AM Eastern Time, Carla Gantz, RDH will present the webinar "What Do You Know About the "Movers and Shakers" In Your Chair?" about Parkinson's Disease. For more information, visit <https://www2.gotomeeting.com/register/448779010>

## Legislative Update

2010 Legislative Session

### ***2010 Legislative Session Comes to a Close***

The Kansas Legislature wrapped up their work in Topeka yesterday after passing a FY 2011 budget and a tax package to fund it. The Legislature will return on May 28 for their ceremonial Sine Die session to consider any last-minute business and formally adjourn for the year.

The great news is that the FY 2011 budget passed by the Legislature includes funding to restore the 10% cut in all Medicaid provider rates. Funds were not included, however, to restore the Medicaid services for pregnant women and people on the Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) waivers. Revenue was included to lower the waiting lists slightly for HCBS developmental disabilities and physical disabilities waivers.

The budget is partially funded by a new sales tax measure. The state sales tax will increase from 5.3% to 6.3% for 3 years. After 3 years, the tax rate will be 5.7%, with the .4% dedicated to the new Comprehensive Transportation Plan that was passed. The other tax increases discussed (tobacco, alcohol, soda tax increases, etc.) were not included. Another revenue enhancement was passed referred to as a nursing home provider tax. This is a mechanism to generate new revenue to fund nursing facility services through Medicaid.

Throughout the interim period between now and the start of the 2011 Session, Oral Health Kansas will work with state agencies to determine if any money can be freed up to restore any dental services. For example, the frail elderly HCBS waiver dental services were not eliminated completely, rather they have been severely limited. This means it is not impossible to restore the services if funding becomes available.

Oral Health Kansas will stay in contact with you about the state budget and opportunities to increase access to dental services for low-income Kansans.

## Ray Lyons Webinar



### Dental Care for Patients with Special Needs

Presented by  
Dr. Ray Lyons, D.D.S.

JUNE 25, 2010

DEITA DENTAL,  
1619 WATERFRONT PARKWAY  
WICHITA, KANSAS

8:30 - 12:00

THE COURSE HAS BEEN APPROVED FOR  
3 HOURS OF CE

REGISTRATION IS FREE AND LIMITED TO 100 PERSONS

#### **Ray Lyons, D.D.S.**

*Chief of Dental Services  
Specialty Needs Dental Clinic  
Los Lunas Community Program*

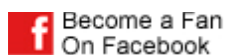
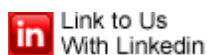
*Ray A. Lyons is the Chief of Dental Services at Los Lunas Community Program in Los Lunas, New Mexico. His practice is limited to children and adults with disabilities and serves as a training site for practitioners desiring to gain special care clinical experience. Dr. Lyons is a past president of the 'Academy of Dentistry for Persons with Disabilities' and of 'Special Care Dentistry.' He is the lead instructor for the Arizona Dental Association/Robert Wood Johnson clinical training initiative on special needs care. He is an adjunct professor at the University of New Mexico Health Science Center and serves on the Board of Directors for Community Services Network of Western Tennessee, a non-profit group charged with developing comprehensive access to medical, dental, behavioral, and rehabilitative services for persons with severe to profound disabilities living in the community.*

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Kansas Dept of Health  
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264-72

For information or to register for the conference, call  
785-296-5116 or email [astreeter@kdheks.gov](mailto:astreeter@kdheks.gov)

If you have an idea, story or suggestion for a Oral Health Kansas Weekly Wednesday Update please send an email to [jparnell@oralhealthkansas.org](mailto:jparnell@oralhealthkansas.org)



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