

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](#).

May 12, 2021

Volume 12, Issue 18



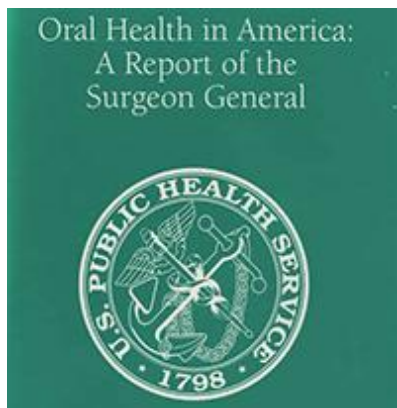
2021 Legislative Session Comes To A Close

The 2021 Legislative Session wrapped up late Friday evening after resolving the two remaining major items, the state budget and K-12 education policy and funding. The legislature will reconvene one final time on May 26th for the single-day Sine Die session for any remaining veto overrides and housekeeping items. Select committee

hearings will be held throughout the interim, but the full legislature will not return until the start of the 2022 Legislative Session in January.

Oral Health Kansas is already preparing for the 2022 Legislative Session, including promotion of [SB 227](#) which would add an adult dental benefit to the Kansas Medicaid program. Keep an eye out in our Weekly Wednesday Update for additional ways to get involved in our advocacy efforts around this important issue!

Last week we shared that [HB2313](#) may allow dental offices to receive property tax relief due to the loss of revenue from business shutdowns at the start of the pandemic. The final bill language that passed through both the House and Senate has not been posted at this time, but we do believe this part of the bill was removed. We will let you know if that changes.



Organizations Call For Release Of Surgeon General's Oral Health Report

The American Dental Association (ADA) and a coalition of health care organizations, **including the Association of State and Territorial Dental Directors (ASTDD)**, sent a [letter](#) to Surgeon General Vivek Murthy, M.D., calling for the release of the 2020 Surgeon General's Report on Oral Health, ADA News reports. The report is expected to explore progress since the release of *Oral Health in America: A Report of the Surgeon General* in 2000 and "articulate a vision for the future of oral health in America," the letter said.

Oral Health Kansas joined hundreds of other stakeholders in submitting public comments in January 2019, with our ask for sustainable support of state coalitions and advocates. We look forward to the hopeful release of the 2020 Surgeon General's Report on Oral Health and the direction and guidance it will provide for oral health work in Kansas and across the nation.

Let's Celebrate School Nurses

The role of school nurses has changed throughout the years. They do more than just check your child's temperature and give you a call when your child is sick. They play an important role in keeping children healthy and safe. School nurses determine all aspects of social determinants of health when working with a child or the family. There are many factors that



contribute to a child's inability to learn. Staying hydrated in school helps children stay focused and alert during the school day.

During the Covid pandemic, schools covered water fountains to reduce spread of the virus. Water fountain spigots contain bacteria on the surfaces. Nevertheless, students and staff need access to water throughout the day, especially during long school hours and after school activities. The Thirsty for Health project, a collaboration between OHK, United School Administrators of Kansas

and Community Action, Inc. in Topeka has a goal 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. This will provide access to water all day for students, while staying safe and not sharing water fountains. School nurses provide leadership as well as community/public health and are a good resource in understanding the importance of having healthy students. Healthy students....healthy community!

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



What Are The Health Care Needs Of Your Community?

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) would like to hear from community members and health care workers about the health care needs in your communities. The information from these surveys will help guide state and

federal agencies that deliver programs for rural and underserved areas. **We are especially interested in having you share any dental needs that you are aware of in your community.** Please take 10 minutes right now to complete one (or both if you are a provider) of the surveys on your computer, mobile device, or tablet. Surveys close early June and results shared in August 2021.

Health Care

Provider: https://wichitastate.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_cAQIH135F9w0PQ2

(This includes anyone working in a hospital, medical clinic, dental office or mental health setting)

Community

Member: https://wichitastate.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9vuu0luR4S0g8Um

(Anyone in the community—health care providers, too!)

Questions? Reach out to the Kansas Office of Primary Care and Rural Health at KDHE.PrimaryCare@ks.gov.



New Oral Health Policy From APHA

The Oral Health Section of the American Public Health Association (APHA) has released a new oral health policy statement, *Improving Access to Dental Care for Pregnant Women through Education, Integration of Health Services, Insurance Coverage, an Appropriate Dental Workforce, and Research*. The policy was approved by APHA's Governing Council in October 2020 and marks an important step in the organization's commitment to public oral health practices.

Less than half of pregnant people in Kansas receive a dental service, and this policy statement recognizes this deficit at the national level and promotes several policy and education tactics that can be used to increase access to dental care for this population. These policy options include making comprehensive dental care a mandatory part of the Medicaid pregnancy-related benefits. One of Oral Health Kansas' core advocacy priorities is creating a comprehensive dental benefit for all adults in Medicaid, so we support the policy priorities within this APHA statement.

This [letter](#) includes a link to the policy statement and specific action steps to improve access to dental care for pregnant women.



Upcoming Events

- 2021 Conference on Oral Health, presented by Oral Health Kansas, November 4 and 5. More information will be provided [here](#).
- Kansas Mission of Mercy, July 23 - 24 in Wichita, Kansas. Find more information [here](#).
- Community Care Network of Kansas, Virtual Conference, September 20 - 23, 2021. More

information coming soon.



Welcome back Christi and welcome our new oral health advocate, Ava! For those of you that may not know, our Policy Director, Christi Wells was out for maternity leave and has recently returned! We missed her so much but her and Baby Ava are already rocking it and getting back into the groove of work. If you need to reach her, you can email her at cwells@oralhealthkansas.org.



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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Oral Health Kansas • PO BOX 4567Topeka, KS 66604
785.235.6039 phone • 785.233.5564 fax info@oralhealthkansas.org
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