

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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May 26, 2021

Volume 12, Issue 20



Conference Speaker: Public Oral Health

This year we welcome back Dr. Bonnie Branson, Professor in the Dental Hygiene Program at the University of Arkansas Fort Smith, to the Conference on Oral Health. She will provide a session on Public Oral Health 101 and is open to anyone that would like to attend. Last year many participants told us they learned a lot and would be interested in her presenting again this year.

Bonnie is also a Dental Champions Alumni from Class 9 and is the former Director of External Rotation Sites for the University of Missouri Kansas City School of Dentistry. We will continue to share details about the Conference on Oral Health and we hope you are getting as excited about the event as we are. The conference dates are Thursday, November 4 and Friday, November 5 (both half days). We will continue to keep you updated!



RADM Ricks Address State Oral Health Coalitions

Last week, the American Network of Oral Health Coalitions held their annual meeting, and Rear Admiral Timothy Ricks gave the keynote address. Dr. Ricks is the Assistant Surgeon General and the Chief Dental Officer of the U.S. Public Health Service. He was the keynote speaker at the Kansas Conference on Oral Health in

2019, and he has visited many other state oral health coalitions over the last two years.

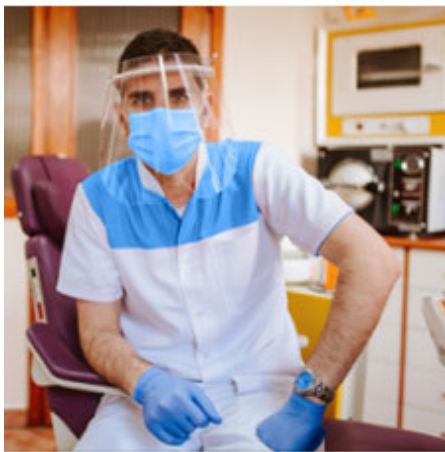
During his presentation Dr. Ricks shared recent national oral health data and trends, but most of all he stressed the importance of partnerships and community collaboration in tackling our nation's toughest oral health challenges. He said, "The key to success at the state level is state oral health coalitions." His insight and wisdom ring true in Kansas and across the country. With our partners at the state and local levels, Oral Health Kansas is working hard to create lasting change by educating Kansans about oral health, advocating for improved Medicaid coverage of dental care, promoting the importance of community water fluoridation, and so much more. As Dr. Ricks said, it takes a village to address daunting challenges. If you haven't gotten involved in our work yet, drop us a line at info@oralhealthkansas.org to find out how you can help us create equitable access to oral health for all Kansans.



Oral Health: An Equity And Social Justice Issue

During the Covid pandemic, many lost their jobs. In the midst of losing their jobs, they also lost their health insurance. Many face having to pay for their utilities and food and not able to pay for health care, including dental care. A [survey](#) by CareQuest Institute for Oral Health released in April found an estimated 6 million Americans lost their dental insurance during the pandemic.

Advocates for expanding dental healthcare coverage are pushing President Biden and members of Congress to include Medicare and Medicaid expansion plans in upcoming coronavirus or healthcare relief bills. The calls to action come as the impact of the coronavirus pandemic has worsened the racial and economic inequities among those who are able to access dental healthcare. Millions of Americans have lost dental insurance or faced economic impacts related to the pandemic, causing greater delays or avoidance of care owing to high costs. "Oral health is not just a health issue, it's a social justice and equity issue", Melissa Burroughs, the associate director for the Oral Health Campaign at the non-profit consumer health advocacy organization Families USA. Click [here](#) to continuing reading the story.



Dental Visits Are Safe During Covid

If you wondered about going to the dentist during a pandemic, feel rest assured that it is safe to visit your dentist. Dental offices already use safety precautions and protocols to keep you and others safe. The American Dental Association published a study that reports that less than 1 percent of dentists nationwide have been found to be COVID-19 positive, which is far less than that of other health professionals. Experts say that's because of safety policies and disinfectant practices dental offices have had for decades. Dr. Edgar Herrera Sanchez, an infectious

disease specialist with Orlando Health in Florida, said he's not surprised with the study's findings. "[Dentists] already do a lot of things that prevent the spread of COVID," Sanchez told Healthline. "So I want to provide a lot of reassurance. If there is a risk of transmission, the person most at risk would be the dentist - not the patient." Read the full story [here](#).



Upcoming Events

- 2021 Conference on Oral Health, presented by Oral Health Kansas, November 4 and 5. More information will be provided [here](#).
- CareQuest, Institute for Oral Health Improving Value in the Oral Health Care System: Payment Transformation, May 27 at 12:00pm. Register [here](#).
- 2021 OPEN Academy, Connecting for Collective Action to Advance Equity and Systems Change, will be held on June 23 - 25, with pre-conference

offerings on June 22, and optional webinars to “set the stage” the week of June 14. Register [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.



This month Oral Health Kansas' Executive Director celebrated 12 years of service to the organization. She had the chance to mark another milestone this month by concluding her 10+ years as the chair of the American Network of Oral Health Coalitions. Being of service to state oral health coalitions has marked her career since she joined Oral Health Kansas, and she is grateful for the opportunity to serve.



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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