



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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Access To Water In Schools

This week is Drinking Water Week and we want to share why it's important to drink water instead of reaching for a sugary beverage, not just this week but every day! Drinking water not only keeps us hydrated it flushes out our body. It's important to teach children to drink water at an early age and help them understand they need water to stay

hydrated and healthy. Whether they're playing all day or in school learning, their bodies and minds get worn out. Having access to water during a school day can definitely help them stay focused on their school work. Drinking sufficient amounts of water can have many health benefits, such as reduced dental cavities and maintaining a healthy weight. Yet, most children and adolescents do not consume enough water.

The Thirsty for Health project, funded by [Voices for Healthy Kids](#), is a collaboration between OHK, 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. This will provide access to water all day for students, while staying safe and not sharing water fountains. Watch a short video [here](#) to learn more about access to water in schools.

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



Legislature Returns For Veto Session

This week the Kansas Legislature returned to the Capitol to wrap up the session for this year. This time is known as “Veto Session,” because it is an opportunity for the Legislature to re-consider any bills the governor has vetoed. As they start the Veto Session, they have a lot of work to do, including finalizing K-12 education funding yet and considering how the latest federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds will be spent in Kansas. [Read a](#)

[brief](#) from the Kansas Legislative Research Department about the ARPA funds in Kansas.

Most of the issues we have been following regarding oral health and public health have been resolved, but an issue popped up this week related to COVID tax relief. [HB 2313](#) would create the COVID retail storefront property tax relief act and is designed to provide partial refunds to businesses that were affected by shutdowns at the beginning of the pandemic. Dental offices are specifically excluded from the list of businesses eligible for the property tax relief, but the Senate tax committee discussed adding dental offices back into the bill this week. [This supplemental note](#) details what is in the bill at this point in time. We will follow this issue as it progresses.

There is no set end date for the Veto Session. The Legislature has to pass a final budget and resolve any other open issues. In some years they meet for only a few days, but they have met as long as a few weeks.



Good Oral Health Doesn't Stop As We Age

May is Older American's Month and we want to reinforce the importance of oral health even as we get older. Cavities do not occur only in your younger years. You can get cavities at any age. As we get older, we may find that we have more issues with our oral health due to medicines we have to take or diseases that may

harm our mouths.

Many older Americans do not have dental insurance because they lost their benefits upon retirement and the federal Medicare program does not cover routine dental care. Brushing, flossing and eating healthy should still be a priority.

If you are a caregiver, [here](#) are some ideas to help you brush the teeth of an older adult, including ways to be creative with a toothbrush that may be hard to handle. Oral Health Kansas also has one pagers to help with caring for [dentures](#) and [dry mouth](#).

2020 State Of America's Oral Health Report

The Delta Dental Plans Association recently [published a report](#) in which they had surveyed American adults and parents of children 12 and under. Delta Dental is committed to bringing awareness to the importance of oral health. Some of their findings are:

- While most Americans report they understand the importance of oral health as it relates to overall health, the research suggests that many are unaware of how the two are actually connected.
- Good oral health starts at home, and a majority of Americans indicated they made their oral health a priority and are paying closer attention to their oral care habits at home as a result of the pandemic.
- Four in 5 (79%) parents with uninsured children and about 1 in 2 (47%) uninsured adults admit the pandemic has motivated them to seek out dental insurance.

You can read the full report [here](#).



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](#).



Congratulations to Peggy Kelly, Kansas Head Start Association's Executive Director, on her retirement! Peggy is retiring after many years of service to the state of Kansas and to the Kansas Head Start Association. Peggy has been involved with Oral Health Kansas in many ways, including

partnering with our Kansas Oral Health Connections project. She brings a positive influence and compassion to the oral health world and early childhood. We will miss her but we know she deserves to enjoy her retirement!



Picture courtesy of Kansas Head Start Association

Peggy will continue as Executive Director of KHSA in the interim period between now and the hiring of a new executive director.



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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