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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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Joplin Tornado and the Dental Community

This week Craig
Palmer at the
American Dental
Association

PEW Report Card and Water Fluoridation

For those of you didn't already see it, Pew recently released their updated report card. Kansas' grade stayed the same, a "C" reflecting that the state met half of the eight policy benchmarks that Pew chose to measure a state's effectiveness in addressing children's oral health.

For a link to the Kansas report card [CLICK HERE](#)

Although the report includes valuable oral health information, I want to point out that there is an error in the data as it relates to Kansas Community Water Fluoridation. The report card notes a drop in the number of Kansans on Community Water Supplies from last year, from 65.1% to 44.7%. In actuality, there has not been a significant drop in the number of Kansans that drink fluoridated water in the last year.

The drop reported by Pew reflects inaccuracies in the data source, the 2008 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Fluoridation Report. Until Kansas was awarded CDC Oral Health Program Infrastructure funding last year, Kansas did not actively contribute water data to the CDC as state contribution to the CDC's database (WFRS) is optional. Because of this, the 2008 CDC Water Fluoridation Report underreports the number of Kansans served by fluoridated water supplies. The Kansas Bureau

reported on the effect of the devastating Joplin tornado on the dental community.

He wrote, "By Missouri Dental Association estimates, 'essentially half of this city's dental community has been affected' by the deadliest U.S. tornado in 60 years.

"This is very devastating for the dental community and the entire surrounding area and city of Joplin," said MDA Executive Director Vicki Wilbers." Of the approximately 57 dentists in 40 locations in Joplin, 23 dentists' offices have been either destroyed or heavily damaged. In order to continue providing services, the MDA is working on ways to help the displaced dentists work in alternate locations, such as mobile dental units.

of Oral Health and the Bureau of Water are actively working with CDC to correct these errors. We have provided CDC with updated data since January, and although fluoridation staff at CDC acknowledges 44.7% is not correct, the statistic will not be updated until the next CDC Water Fluoridation Report is published, probably next year.

It is important to stress that Kansas never experienced a 20% drop in the number of citizens drinking optimally fluoridated water. The last confirmed statistic is what Pew reported last year, 65.1%. The Kansas Department of Health and Environment is committed to advancing the numbers of communities who fluoridate. Community water fluoridation is one of most effective, safe and universally accessible ways to reduce dental disease. KDHE is working with national, state and local partners to increase the numbers of citizens who benefit from ingesting optimally fluoridated water. We recognize that accurate water fluoridation data is crucial in these advocacy efforts, and we are working on providing more clear and accurate data in the near future.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me.

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A close up look at what the tornado did to one of Dr. McGinty's treatment rooms.
Photo by Craig Palmer

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