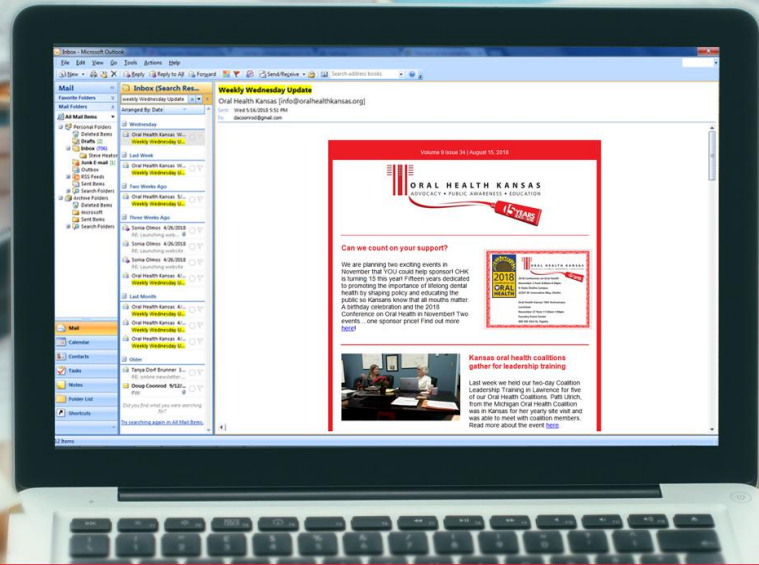




ORAL HEALTH KANSAS
ADVOCACY • PUBLIC AWARENESS • EDUCATION



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](#).

September 30, 2020

Volume 11, Issue 39



Conference Speaker Is Back By Popular Demand

One of the favorite speakers at the Conference on Oral Health will be back this year! Oral Health Kansas' lobbyist Dr. Stuart Little will discuss how COVID-19 is changing the public policy landscape in our state. He will share updates about the November election's effect on the makeup of the legislature and insight

about what to expect in the 2021 session. Dr. Little will share ideas about how to begin conversations with policymakers and some easy ways to get involved in advocacy.

The days for the online sessions are the mornings of Friday, October 30 and Friday, November 6. This year's conference will feature state and national speakers discussing vulnerabilities in dental care access and opportunities for improvement.

Large groups will also be able to participate in the conference at a reduced group rate. Due to interest from organizations and dental clinics to register several staff members for the conference, we developed a group rates to allow more of your team to learn about the latest successes and opportunities for improvement in the oral health of Kansas. The rates are designed for different sizes of dental offices and for dental and dental hygiene classes.

When: Friday, October 30, 9:00am-12:00pm **AND** Friday, November 6, 8:00am-12:00pm

ONE individual registration fee will give you access to **BOTH** virtual session days!

Individual Registration Fees

Single: \$60

Student: \$15

Group rates

Dental Team Rates

Names and contact information for each attendee will be required

- 2 to 5 - \$45 per person
- 6 to 10 - \$40 per person
- 11 or more - \$35 per person

Classroom Rate

Dental and dental hygiene classes of 12 or more people can benefit from the Classroom rate and get a set of classroom discussion questions to guide conversations based on the subjects covered during the conference.

\$500 + a set of classroom discussion questions

Register for the conference [here!](#)

KanCare Oversight Committee Met This Week

This week the legislative committee that oversees the Kansas Medicaid program, known as KanCare, met. The joint committee includes members of the House and Senate health committees and meets four times each year. Oral Health Kansas provided testimony about



two issues the legislature has worked on over the past couple of years. The legislature approved a \$3 million increase in KanCare dental rates this year. We testified about the rates targeted in the increase and noted some of the codes we believe need to be included this year. It is unclear whether the rate increase has gone into effect and which rates are included in the proposed increase, so we brought the issue to the attention of the committee for their consideration.

Oral Health Kansas also testified about teledentistry. We were pleased that KDHE authorized two KanCare dental codes to be provided via teledentistry through June 30. This helped Medicaid dental providers assess the needs of their patients and prioritize how and when to see them, both during the office closures and as they opened back up again. The purpose of teledentistry is to triage needs. Dental services cannot be performed, but dentists are able to assess urgency, prioritize patient needs, and even soothe patients' worries about their dental needs. Because aerosols are produced in dental procedures and the coronavirus is spread through aerosols, it is important for dental office staff to use additional personal protective equipment (PPE) in order to keep everyone safe. This means an added benefit of teledentistry is that it can reduce the burn rate of PPE if dentists are able to assess dental needs via video without having to don all of the PPE necessary to step into the patient exam room. Oral Health Kansas has been working with Community Care Network of Kansas and the Kansas Dental Association to advocate to authorize teledentistry more permanently. We believe it is important to make dental care as easy to access as possible as the COVID-19 pandemic continues, and authorizing teledentistry is one clear way this can happen. Kansas is becoming an island in regard to teledentistry, as our neighboring states of Missouri, Nebraska, and Colorado have authorized it. We asked the committee to consider recommending the issue of teledentistry be considered in the 2021 legislative session.

Committee members voiced interest about both of the issues we presented before them, and we look forward to continuing to work alongside them to ensure Kansans have access to affordable, quality dental care. Oral Health Kansas will keep you updated about these issues and additional policy issues. Copies of our testimony can be found on our website at www.oralhealthkansas.org/testimony.html.



Health Forward Foundation Celebrates 15 Years

[Health Forward Foundation \(HFF\)](#) is celebrating 15 years!

To mark this milestone, they held a virtual celebration and shared a new vision for their work moving forward. Access to healthcare, including oral health, will remain a significant priority for them but they will also have an increased focus on racial equity in their next 15 years.

HFF has supported us for over 10 years and with their continued support we have been able to work to promote policy change and engage in public education around oral health. We look forward to working alongside them to make change in these areas and to deepening our work on race equity. Watch their virtual celebration [here](#).



Providers See Decline In Services

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) released preliminary Medicaid and Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) data revealing that, during the COVID-19 crisis, rates for vaccinations, primary, and preventive services among children in Medicaid and CHIP have steeply declined. The [data analysis reveals](#) that, compared to the same time period in 2019, there was a 69% drop in dental services provided.

Although the pandemic continues, there are ways to remain cautious while visiting your primary care doctor or dental office. Oral Health Kansas created a guide for consumers to help them prepare for their dental visit during the COVID pandemic. This is available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#). Two clinics in Kansas showed us what their dental clinics look like during the pandemic. This [video](#) has helped consumers prepare and know what changes they might see while visiting their dental office. Oral Health Kansas also advocated for the Kansas Medicaid program to change the frequency schedule for preventive dental visits. Previously children could receive a dental cleaning every six months, and now they can receive two dental cleanings per year.



New FDA Recommendations About Dental Amalgams

Last week the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) released updated recommendations about the use of dental amalgam, which are the silver color fillings that are made up of a mixture of mercury, silver, copper, tin and zinc. The FDA said, “In general, people with multiple dental amalgam fillings may have slightly higher mercury levels in their blood or urine, however, they usually remain at a level considered safe. Studies on people with dental amalgam do not show conclusive evidence that dental amalgam causes harmful health effects in the general population.” The new guidance from the FDA does not recommend

people have their amalgam fillings replaced but does issue some caution for a few populations. Links to the FDA guidance are below.

- [Safety Communication](#)
- [Patient Brochure website](#)
- [Patient Brochure printable format](#)
- [Dental Amalgam website](#)

The [American Dental Association \(ADA\)](#) [issued a news release](#) saying the Association supported the FDA recommendation that “existing amalgam fillings in good condition should not be removed or replaced unless it is considered medically necessary.” While the FDA said certain groups may be at greater risk for potential negative effects from exposure to mercury, the ADA release noted that FDA also said there is “little to no information” known about the effects dental amalgam may have on these specific groups and stressed there “was no new scientific evidence cited as part of the FDA recommendation.” For dentists who have patients with questions about the FDA news, the ADA has an [Oral Health Topics page on dental amalgam](#) and information on all restorative materials at [MouthHealthy.org](#).



Congratulations to Missouri Dental Director John Dane on being named Dentist of the Year by the Missouri Dental Association! Oral Health

Kansas has had the opportunity to work with Dr. Dane on a number of national projects, including a recent project through the ADA's Dental Quality Alliance to improve access to Medicaid dental care. We are grateful for his regional and national leadership.





Sugary Drink Display Sanitation

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.



Out of an abundance of caution, we are suspending use of the Sugary Drink Display until further notice.

Follow Us



Oral Health Kansas • 712 S. Kansas Ave., Suite 412 Topeka, KS 66603
785.235.6039 phone • 785.233.5564 fax info@oralhealthkansas.org
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