



## O R A L H E A L T H K A N S A S

### Talking Points for the 2010 Omnibus Session

- Over the past year the state budget has been cut by more than \$1 billion. Every portion of the budget has been affected from highway programs and universities to health care and the parks system, and of course, oral health services. In July the state will mark its fourth straight year of revenue decline for the first time in modern history. Revenue enhancements are the only responsible approach to filling the half billion dollar hole remaining in the state budget at this point.
- All state funding has been eliminated for Medicaid dental services for pregnant women; people with developmental and physical disabilities, traumatic brain injury; and elderly Kansans.
- Research shows that people who receive routine dental services are able to manage oral health problems that could lead to more serious and costly health problems, including pneumonia, strokes, and heart conditions. Eliminating preventive dental services has and will cost the state more money in addressing the serious health problems people on Medicaid experience.
- When the state budget began to decline dramatically last year, dental services for pregnant women were the very first Medicaid services to be eliminated. Let us not forget that first cut and the 13,000 pregnant women and their babies who need early preventive dental services to be healthy.
- Medicaid pays for 40% of the births in Kansas. Investing state funds in dental services for pregnant women can not only save lives, but also save state dollars in complicated deliveries.
- Dental services for people with disabilities and elderly Kansans were enacted by the 2007 Legislature. Since then 3,800 people with disabilities and over a thousand elderly people have been able to take care of their oral health each year. In January 2010, access to those important services was cut off.
- The Legislature's bold action to implement a statewide smoking ban this year will be bolstered by increasing the taxes on tobacco. These two policy decisions will show our state's dedication to improving the health of all Kansans. Not only will the tobacco tax limit the use of tobacco by many Kansans, but it also will increase the amount of revenue available to meet the needs of thousands of Kansans.
- In January 2010 the Executive Director of the Center for Science in the Public Interest issued a statement on a New York soda tax proposal. He said, "Taxpayers in New York State and elsewhere are already paying a heavy price for out-of-control soda consumption, since taxpayers subsidize much of the treatment of obesity, diabetes, and other expensive health problems."
- The cost to restore Medicaid dental services for nearly 18,000 Kansans is \$1.2 million. The value to those 18,000 Kansans is immeasurable.
- Oral Health Kansas supports a broad mix of tax increases to restore these services. The fat was trimmed from the state budget long ago, and thousands of Kansans should not suffer any longer because they cannot get the services they need. New revenue will provide our state the ability to reinvest in its citizens by ensuring people do not have to go without the critical dental and medical care they need. It is the right investment for Kansans at the right time.