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Community Coalitions Update

Doug Bowman, Community Coalition Coordinator, and Marcia Manter, Community Development Specialist, have been meeting with local communities over the past couple of weeks. We will be sharing more information about the progression of these community coalitions in the upcoming months. If you are interested in improving oral health in your community contact us today!

Legislative Adjourns for April Break

On April 2, the regular session of the Kansas Legislature concluded. Legislators will reconvene for the wrap-up session on Wednesday, April 29. Many issues remain unresolved, including Medicaid expansion and the state budget. Oral Health Kansas’ lobbyist Dr. Stuart Little provided this update about where issues were left and what remains to be done before the Legislature adjourns for the year in May. While not all issues relate directly to health and oral health issues, they all do play a part in outlining the current state policy landscape.

The House and Senate budget committees have reached an agreement on a budget bill, but it was not presented to the full House and Senate for a vote before the regular session concluded. It appears the Legislature determined they did not want to approve a budget bill before they knew how much revenue would be needed to balance. They will wait until after the April 20th official revenue estimates for the next two years are determined. Further, March revenue collections were $11 million below estimates and the state is $48 million below projected revenue collections for the current fiscal year, which ends in June.
who were unaware or didn’t understand the implications of this new requirement, the shared responsibility payment, to enroll in 2015 health insurance coverage through the Federally-facilitated Marketplaces (FFM). **This period of enrollment began March 15 and goes through April 30, 2015.**

Kansans who want to find a Navigator or other assister in their area can visit [www.insureks.org](http://www.insureks.org). These Cover Kansas Navigators have completed training with CMS, passed background checks and are available at trusted community organizations around our state.

Check out **this flyer from Cover Kansas** for more information and to see who is eligible for this enrollment period.

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**Join In: WSU Dental Day**

Wichita State University Advanced Education in General Dentistry Program is hosting a Dental Day for students interested in a career in dentistry. Dental Day is a great opportunity for students to gain hands-on experience in the field of dentistry and dental hygiene. This camp is geared toward high school students interested in the field of dentistry, including dental hygiene and dental assisting.

This program will be held Friday, June 26, and registration closes June 1st or until all spots are filled. Find out more about this opportunity at the [Dental Day website](http://www.insureks.org)!

Schools and K-12 financing are a critical part of both the budget and revenue discussions, with all the discussion taking place against the backdrop of the Kansas Supreme Court reviewing a district court decision that stated the K-12 system is underfunded and that additional funds are needed. The Legislature and the Governor passed a new school finance law that repeals the current school finance formula and sets school funding for the next two years in a block grant. The 3rd District Court in Shawnee County has scheduled a hearing on May 7th to respond to a plaintiffs’ request for an injunction to stop the block grant law. Any decision will be appealed to the State Supreme Court, so this issue is far from being resolved. School funding makes up the vast majority of the state’s budget, so this issue essentially relates to all other issues being considered by the Legislature.

Efforts to pass the Registered Dental Practitioner bill continued in 2015 with no success. Both chambers’ health committees held hearings on the bills in late February, but neither advanced out of committee. At this point, the issue likely will not be considered this year.

Two years ago, Oral Health Kansas was part of a group of stakeholders that successfully advocated to establish a legislative oversight committee for the state’s Medicaid program known as KanCare. This year, Senators introduced legislation to change the makeup of the oversight committee and to change the meeting structure for the committee during the interim time between legislative sessions. Oral Health Kansas again joined fellow advocates to keep the committee structure intact as much as possible. A House/Senate conference committee has agreed on a compromise, which will be considered by both chambers during the wrap-up session.
The Kansas City CARE Clinic (formerly Kansas City Free Health Clinic) is hosting a one-day free clinic in Kansas City, Missouri, on April 18. The event will offer free basic medical and dental care and health education to the area's medically underserved. More dentist volunteers are needed in order to serve the people expected to need dental services. Please visit the KC CARE event website to learn more about the event and how to volunteer.

The House Health and Human Services Committee held a hearing on Medicaid expansion last month, but the bill remains in committee and will not advance. The hearing was packed with supporters, led by the Kansas Hospital Association, and included testimony in support from Oral Health Kansas. The bill would repeal the legislative prohibition against the Governor pursuing Medicaid expansion without legislative approval and would direct KDHE to begin negotiating with CMS about a Kansas-specific plan. If the Governor and the Legislature approve Medicaid Expansion, nearly half of the state's uninsured adults will be covered by KanCare. They also will have access to the KanCare preventive dental benefit, which is helping more Kansans than ever address their oral health needs. Approval of Medicaid expansion remains unlikely, however, as the administration continues to appear to be opposed.

When the full Legislature returns to Topeka on April 29th to begin the final veto/wrap-up session, several policy bills will await their action, but aside from the budget is the main issue that is still unresolved. Education funding, abortion restrictions, and gun legislation have all passed and few other issues have much energy. The most critical issue the legislators will face is how to resolve the $600 million revenue hole for the next two years. They will debate tax policy and revenue in combination with some possible budget cuts. A few weeks ago Oral Health Kansas testified in support of increasing tobacco taxes. If any action occurs on this issue, it will be during the wrap-up session. Oral Health Kansas will keep supporters updated on activity under the dome and will ask for help in contacting legislators when necessary.

This Month: Oral Cancer Awareness
This display is completely free, and return shipping costs are reimbursed by Oral Health Kansas. Learn more on our website and email Sarah if you are interested in hosting the display!

Month

This month is Oral Cancer Awareness Month. While smoking and tobacco use are still major risk factors for oral cancer, the fastest growing segment of oral cancer patients is young, healthy, nonsmoking individuals due to the connection to the HPV virus.

Oral Health Kansas has teamed up with the Kansas Foundation for Medical Care (KFMC) to promote HPV vaccination in the preteen population. KFMC has developed many important tools to teach parents and preteens about the HPV virus and its vital vaccination.

To learn more visit 3protectkids.com.

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