

Oral Health Kansas, Inc.

Because it matters. . .

E-Newsletter

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*Our Mission: To improve oral health in Kansas through advocacy,
public awareness and education.*

ORAL HEALTH KANSAS UPDATE

After months of planning, Oral Health Kansas is finally up and running! Each one of you deserves a pat on the back for all of your hard work in making this dream a reality. At long last, this coalition will focus much-needed attention on the growing oral health crisis in the state of Kansas. Through advocacy, public education and awareness activities, Oral Health Kansas will strive to improve the oral health status of all Kansans.

Articles of Incorporation have been filed and an Executive Director has been hired. Teresa Schwab started as the new Director at the end of October. Teresa has a Master's Degree in Social Work from the University of Kansas and has a background in public policy and advocacy in the child welfare arena.

The Board of Directors held its first meeting in November. The following individuals were named to the Board:

- Mary Baskett, KS Head Start Assn.
- Kevin Robertson, KS Dental Assn.
- Judy Eyerly, KS Assn. for the Medically Underserved
- Graham Bailey, Blue Cross/Blue Shield of KS
- Dr. Dennis Cooley, KS Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
- Barry Daneman, UMKC School of Dentistry
- Ron Gaches, Kansas Dental Hygienists Association
- Judy Johnston, Dept. of Preventive Medicine & Public Health, KU School of Medicine in Wichita
- Ann Koci, Social & Rehabilitation Services
- Nialson Lee, Social & Rehabilitation Services
- Dawn McGlasson, KS Dept. of Health & Environment
- Kim Moore, United Methodist Health Ministries Fund
- Deborah Stern, KS Hospital Assn.
- Sharon Tidwell, Jones Foundation
- Lisa Ward, Delta Dental of KS

A press release was sent to all Kansas newspapers as well as television stations announcing the existence of the coalition. The Director is currently working with a designer to develop a logo and other business products and has just finished the process of setting our 2004 legislative agenda. (Look for information about our '04 Agenda in your next e-newsletter.)

You will be receiving regular updates from Oral Health Kansas detailing our progress and keeping you up to date on current legislative activity.

Keep your eyes open for upcoming coalition activities!

LEGISLATIVE SESSION TO BEGIN ON MONDAY

The 2004 Legislative Session will officially begin on Monday, January 12.

That evening, Governor Kathleen Sebelius will give her State of the State Address, detailing her vision of the upcoming year and offering a glimpse of her budget priorities. Her address will begin at 7 p.m. and will be aired live on your local public television station and will also be aired live on many statewide radio stations.

Copies of the Governor's budget will be available following her address.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

On Thursday, February 19, OHK will host a Legislative event at the Kansas State Capitol.

The day will include a breakfast for Legislators, advocacy training for coalition members and personal visits with policy makers to discuss oral health issues in the state.

Details about the event will be available soon.

Please call the OHK office if you have questions, or watch for details in your e-mail.

SOME FACTS ABOUT ORAL HEALTH IN KANSAS

Workforce:

- General dentists: 1,193
- Pediatric dentists: 22
- Registered dental hygienists: 1,246

- Dentists enrolled in Medicaid: 24%
- Dental schools: 0
- Dental Hygiene schools: 3
- Number of counties designated as underserved: 96

Infrastructure:

- Population with public water: 2,421,274
- Percent of population with fluoridated water: 62.5%

Service Locations:

- Community based low income dental clinics: 9
- Health departments providing dental services: 2

BECOME AN ORAL HEALTH KANSAS MEMBER TODAY!

Please join us in improving the oral health status of all Kansas citizens.

Privileges of membership:

- Opportunity to participate in the OHK annual meeting.
- Subscription to the OHK electronic newsletter, which includes information on state and national oral health initiatives and activities as well as legislative updates and alerts throughout the legislative session.
- Legislative, Executive and Administrative Branch and community advocacy representation.
- Opportunity to participate in coalition committees and other work groups.
- Discounted rates for OHK training and/or other events or educational opportunities.

Types of membership:

- **Sustaining Member (Above \$500):** Consider making an additional gift to Oral Health Kansas to support us in achieving our mission.
- **Corporate Member (\$500):** Open to for-profit entities, corporations, businesses, consultants, vendors or institutions that support oral health issues or provide oral health services.
- **Associate Member (\$100):** Open to not-for-profit or public entities or organizations that support oral health projects or provide oral health services.
- **Individual Member (\$25):** Open to any individual who is interested in oral health issues (ex. individual dentists or hygienists, consumers, or other interested parties).

To receive a copy of the membership application, please contact the OHK office. To download an application, please visit www.ohk.org.

ORAL HEALTH KANSAS: A BRIEF COALITION DESCRIPTION

Oral Health Kansas is a coalition of members committed to improving the oral health status of all Kansas Citizens. With support from major contributors, membership dues and other donations, the coalition has its focus in five strategic areas:

- Prevention
- Access to oral health care
- Oral health leadership
- Oral health status
- Developing a dental workforce

The coalition is comprised of a diverse group of individuals and organizations whose commitment to improving oral health is clear. Through convening major stakeholders around the state, critical issues were identified that warranted a more coordinated effort if significant improvement was to be achieved in the status of oral health in Kansas. A steering committee was established in the Spring of 2003, and it developed a strategic plan for the coalition.

The strategic plan now drives the activities of the organization. Oral Health Kansas needs each of you in its effort to bring a level of awareness and credibility to oral health issues which has not previously existed in our state.

By bringing our collective voices together, we *can* make a difference for the citizens of Kansas!

PLEASE HELP US

Please feel free to pass this newsletter on to others who you know who might be interested in receiving information regarding oral health activities and updates about what is happening in the Federal and State Legislature.

If you know someone who would like to become an Oral Health Kansas member, please have them call the OHK office.

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