



# Oral Health News

December 1, 2004

Vol. 1 No. 7

## Mission:

To improve oral health in Kansas through advocacy, public awareness and education.

## Oral Health Kansas Strategic Areas:

- Access to Care
- Prevention
- Oral Health Status
- Oral Health Leadership
- Work Force

## 2005 ORAL HEALTH ADVOCACY AGENDA

With several high-profile events occurring during the 2005 legislative session, this will be a year full of opportunity to highlight the needs in the area of oral health care.

The Governor has announced a new health care plan, a Mission of Mercy free dental clinic will be held in Salina in February, and Kansas Action for Children will embark upon a major oral health public engagement campaign. In addition, the state will hire a new Dental Director, and OHK will sponsor a workforce summit early during the session.

As part of our 2005 advocacy agenda, OHK has agreed to work on the following issues: expansion of adult Medicaid to include dental services, community water fluoridation, the Governor's health care plan, and other initiatives designed to ease the current dental workforce shortage.

Additionally, OHK will partner with other organizations to work on the following issues: expansion of health clinic funding for dental, promotion of Medicaid/HealthWave to providers, promotion of healthy choices in school vending machines, and other federal legislative initiatives; namely, the Children's Dental Health Improvement Act and the Dental Health Provider Shortage Act.

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## ORAL HEALTH KANSAS ADDS NEW MEMBER TO ITS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Loretta Seidl was recently accepted to serve on the Board of Directors of Oral Health Kansas.

Seidl, a Registered Dental Hygienist, is the current Director of Professional Development at Kansas Association of Homes and Services for the Aging (KAHSA) in Topeka. Seidl has 30 years experience in the field of dentistry and long-term care.

## EARLY HEAD START CREATES EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR PREGNANT MOMS

Recognizing that a pregnant woman's oral health can significantly affect the health of her baby, Early Head Start programs in 35 counties scattered across Kansas will be an education program for pregnant women and their families. The program will provide materials, education and training on maintaining quality oral health.

### Some facts about pregnancy and oral health:

- Pregnant women need appropriate amounts of folic acid and calcium to ensure that the teeth and palate develop correctly.
- Morning sickness, poor nutrition and hormone-induced gingivitis can all negatively affect a pregnant woman's oral health.
- Untreated gum and tooth disease can result in severe infections. Some research suggests a link between periodontal disease and low birth weight babies and pre-term labor.



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## ORAL HEALTH KANSAS RECEIVES GRANT FOR COMMUNICATION INFRASTRUCTURE

On December 1, Delta Dental Plan of Kansas Foundation awarded OHK a grant to develop graphic materials that will be used at events, such as conferences and health fairs, to display information on oral health. In addition, the Foundation will also provide Oral Health Kansas with resources to create a website for the organization.

The website will feature information about the organization as well as the most current oral health information and data available.

We will let you know as soon as the new site is up and available for public viewing.

*Oral Health Kansas:  
Making oral health  
a priority in Kansas  
...because it matters!*

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## ORAL HEALTH WORKFORCE SUMMIT

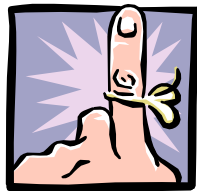
Oral Health Kansas, in conjunction with Kansas Health Institute and United Methodist Health Ministry Fund, will convene a dental workforce summit on January 20-21, 2005. The summit will examine the current dental workforce situation here in the state and will explore recommendations to alleviate the problem.

The two-day event will include a press conference, an informational meeting open to the public that will include invitations to legislators and other policy makers, and an all-day working summit where participants will explore and create work plans to address the current shortage of dental professionals.

These work plans will provide the foundation of a multi-year advocacy strategy for Oral Health Kansas and its partners.

For more information about the event, contact Teresa Schwab at 785.235.6039, or by e-mail at [oralhealthkansas@ohks.com](mailto:oralhealthkansas@ohks.com).

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS: ORAL HEALTH "DAY ON THE HILL"



In celebration of Children's Dental Health Month, Oral Health Advocacy Day will be held at the Kansas Capitol on February 8, 2005.

For this event, we will be hosting a breakfast reception for legislators and their staff, starting at 7 a.m.

Please join us and take the opportunity to visit with your legislator about oral health.