



ORAL HEALTH KANSAS

Oral Health Coalition

Keeping you informed

February 6, 2004

Volume 1, Number 2

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

2004 Legislative Agenda

Oral Health Kansas set its Legislative agenda in early January. The Coalition will advocate for two funding allocations this session, including:

- Funding for a state Dental Director within the Department of Health and Environment.
- Funding for comprehensive adult Medicaid dental services in the Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services.

Funding for the Dental Director and for adult Medicaid dental services were both included in the respective department's enhanced budgets that were presented to the Governor this Fall. Unfortunately, neither allocation found its way into the Governor's Recommended Budget.

OHK provided testimony to the Senate Subcommittee at the end of January recommending funding be included in the KDHE budget for a Dental Director. Today, the Senate Subcommittee recommended including funding for the position and will present its report to the full Ways and Means Committee next Wednesday.

If you would like to receive a copy of our testimony, please contact the OHK office.

Some Facts About Our Legislative Priorities

Dental Director:

Facts:

- Kansas is one of only seven states which do not have a Dental Director.
- Kansas lacks the leadership capacity to make our state eligible for private and federal grant opportunities.
- Kansas has no state Dental Director to coordinate public/private partnerships or to help communities attract and retain oral health professionals.
- Kansas ranks as the 5th worst state in terms of its commitment to a sound, statewide oral health program.
- A state Dental Director would link programs, services and data necessary to improve the oral health of all Kansans.

Comprehensive Adult Medicaid Dental Services:

Facts:

**Oral Health
Kansas Strategic
Areas:**

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

- Currently, Medicaid only covers *emergency* dental services for adults (and only for conditions that threaten the health of the person, such as extraction of infected teeth).
- Medicaid serves the most vulnerable Kansans—those with disabilities, mental illness, frail elderly, highly impoverished and pregnant mothers living in poverty.
- Many Kansas adults receiving Medicaid are forced to use the hospital emergency room for otherwise avoidable dental health issues.
- Providing comprehensive dental services to adult Kansans receiving Medicaid would prevent pain and suffering and the high cost of hospitalizations and advanced disease that result from delayed care.
- Federal Medicaid regulations leave it up to individual states whether to provide dental services to Medicaid recipients. Currently, Kansas does not provide comprehensive dental care.
- Among all of the services provided to the neediest Kansans, comprehensive dental care is *not* among them.
- If an adult Medicaid recipient has a dental need, all costs must be paid out-of-pocket, or it must be ignored.

Join us for Advocacy Day

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2004
TOPEKA, KANSAS**

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS:

- 7-9 A.M. BREAKFAST FOR ALL LEGISLATORS & STAFF**
Kansas State Capitol
3rd Floor Hallway (beside the Old Supreme Court)
- 9:30-1 P.M. ADVOCACY TRAINING**
Presented by: Marcia J. Nielsen, PhD, MPH
Holiday Inn West Holidome
605 Fairlawn Road (I-70 and Fairlawn)
Topeka Room
- 1-2 P.M. ACCOMPANIED VISITS WITH KEY COMMITTEE LEGISLATORS**
- Experienced lobbyists and advocates will accompany Coalition members on visits with Legislators sitting on key committees.
- 2-4 P.M. VISITS ON YOUR OWN WITH YOUR HOMETOWN LEGISLATORS**
- Please call ahead to make appointments with your own Senators and Representatives. OHK staff will be happy to help you identify or make contact with your Legislators.

Please RSVP by Thursday, February 12th to the OHK office.

Hotel accommodations: If you will be traveling from out of town, you may call the Holiday Inn Holidome at 1-800-822-0216.

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

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Become a Member

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 <http://www.kpha.bluestep.net>.

OHK 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

In 2003, interested parties from around the state identified critical issues which warranted a more coordinated effort to considerably improve the oral health status of Kansans. Oral Health Kansas, Inc. was born of this group's efforts.

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 in the oral health of all Kansans!



Contact Us

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