



ORAL HEALTH KANSAS

# Oral Health Kansas E-newsletter

April 12, 2004

Volume 1, Number 4

**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**

## **Legislature on Break Until End of April:**

### **A look at what's happened on the oral health front so far. . .**

#### **Dental Director:**

During Conference Committee negotiations, committee members agreed to add \$50,000 in State General Fund (SGF) dollars to fund a state Dental Director! This is a huge success for the Coalition, and it puts us yet another step closer to realizing our goal.

Both chambers still have to debate the "Mega Bill" when they reconvene on April 28<sup>th</sup>. This means everything in the bill is potentially still on the table; however, having both Senate and House leadership support is a good sign that the Dental Director will retain support in the full Senate and House.

We will keep you posted.

#### **Budget Bill Proviso:**

Also in Conference Committee negotiations, the committee members agreed to add a Proviso to the Mega Bill directing the Board of Regents to examine increasing the number of dental school seats in surrounding state dental schools or establishing a dental school in Kansas.

#### **Hospital/HMO Assessment:**

Under new legislation that passed both the House and Senate, an assessment will be imposed on hospitals and the HMO provider for the state, FirstGuard, in order to leverage matching federal dollars. The money coming back into the state from the hospital assessments will be used to increase Medicaid rates paid to physicians and hospitals.

The HMO assessment will be utilized to increase Medicaid rates paid to dentists, doctors and pharmacies and will allow safety net clinics more money to expand dental care access.

This plan is receiving a lot of support from the Governor's Office, Legislators and the private sector. After the Governor has signed the new Legislation, the next step will be to get approval from the Federal Medicaid office. It is anticipated that this process will take several months; however, similar plans have already been approved in 22 other states.

### **Fluoridation:**

Concerned with the mandate language included in SB 530, the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee chose not to work the bill this year. Instead, the committee passed a Resolution supporting the use of fluoride and encouraging communities to fluoridate their water supplies.

The Resolution has not been heard in the full Senate.

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## **Another Mission of Mercy Coming Soon**

The third Kansas Mission of Mercy (KMOM) project is scheduled for April 30 and May 1-2 in Pittsburg, Kansas. Other KMOM projects have already been held in Garden City and Kansas City, and both of the previous projects were an overwhelming success.

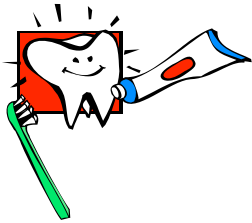
At both events combined, over 4,000 patients were served and over \$1 million in free dental care was provided!

In Pittsburg, the Kansas Dental Association (KDA) expects an 80-85 chair capacity for providing dental services to patients. This event will be held inside a climate-controlled gymnasium, so weather should not be a factor for patients and volunteers.

For more information on the KMOM projects, please visit the KDA's website at [www.ksdental.org](http://www.ksdental.org).

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## **Colgate Dental Van Visits Topeka Area**



The Colgate Bright Smiles Bright Futures Dental Van is visiting the Topeka area this week. This is the 4th year the van has visited the area.

Local Dentists and Dental Hygienists are providing visual dental screenings on children, assessing their oral health and making suggestions for needed treatment. On this visit, the van hopes to screen approximately 2,500 children in seven area elementary schools. In addition to the screenings, school children are attending an educational program to learn about the importance of brushing, flossing, limiting sugars and starches and visiting a dentist.

The van is brought to the Topeka area by the following organizations: Hill's Pet Nutrition, Success By 6, K-State Research and Extension, Kansas Dental Association and the Stormont-Vail Foundation.

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

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## Save the Date!

What: Oral Health Kansas Annual Meeting  
When: Wednesday, September 22, 2004  
Where: Wichita, Kansas



*Keep your eyes open for more details in the upcoming weeks.*

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## Opportunity to Get Involved

In preparation for our Board retreat and Annual Meeting, Oral Health Kansas is in the process of putting together an Education Task Team to look at our strategic education plan for the coming year.

We will be exploring target audiences and messages as well as educational opportunities for the Coalition's involvement.

If you would like to participate on the Task Team, please contact Teresa Schwab at [oralhealthkansas@ohks.com](mailto:oralhealthkansas@ohks.com) as soon as possible.

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## 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!

**To become a member, please contact the OHK office, or to download an application, please visit <http://www.kpha.bluestep.net>.**

Benefits of membership include the following:

- 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.

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## Contact Us

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**Please note:** The Executive Director will be on maternity leave during the months of May and June. The OHK Administrative Assistant will continue to check e-mail, faxes and voice mail during that time and will either respond to you, or will direct you to another source. You may notice a delay in a response to your inquiries--we thank you in advance for your patience.