



## Speaker and Moderator Biographies

### State of the State of Oral Health in Kansas

- **Tanya Dorf Brunner** has served as Executive Director of Oral Health Kansas since 2009. Tanya is the co-founder and a past chair of the American Network of Oral Health Coalitions, a national organization dedicated to supporting and promoting the work of state oral health coalitions. She also serves as a co-chair of the OPEN Network's Policy Committee and is a member of the Board of Directors for the Dental Assistants National Board.
- Little Government Relations (LGR) is a government relations and advocacy firm established in 2001. **Stuart Little** leads LGR's client representation and lobbying. The firm works in the fields of healthcare, local government, public education, social services, and other areas. Before founding LGR, Stuart worked as a senior fiscal analyst for the Kansas Legislative Research Department. He graduated from Oklahoma State University, earning his Master's in U.S. History from the University of Kansas, followed by a Doctorate in History from Indiana University.

### Access to Dental Care in Rural Kansas

- **Dr. Melanie Simmer-Beck** is the Dental Public Health and Behavioral Science Department Chair and the Oral and Craniofacial Science Interim Department Chair at the UMKC School of Dentistry. She holds joint appointments in both departments. She has been teaching dental and dental hygiene students continuously since 2004. Her research focuses on access to oral health care, oral health workforce models and policy, implementation science, and program evaluation. She has been an Oral Health Kansas Board member since 2018 and serves serve as the Missouri State Champion for the "One Hundred Million Mouths Project."
- **Dr. Chuck Abbick** is the Executive Director of Dental Services at Salina Family Healthcare Center, a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) in Salina, KS. His areas of interest include pediatric dentistry, oral surgery, educating dental students on rotations, increasing access to dental care for underserved populations in north-central Kansas, and inspiring members his dental team to reach their full potential. Dr. Abbick earned a B.S. in Mathematics from KU and a D.D.S. from UMKC, graduating from both universities Summa Cum Laude. His father, "Doc" Abbick, practiced dentistry in Junction City for nearly 40 years and is Chuck's inspiration for

becoming a dentist. Dr. Abbick also serves on Oral Health Kansas' Board of Directors. This summer Dr. Abbick celebrated his wedding to his new wife Jessica.

- **Dr. Beatrice Brittan** is a general dentist in Abilene, KS. She earned her Doctorate of Dental Surgery from the University of Minnesota and practiced in Colorado before returning to her small hometown in Kansas to practice. Her clinical interests include prosthodontics, esthetic dentistry, and the integration of Botox and fillers in esthetic and therapeutic dental care. She believes a combination of deep respect for the basic principles of dentistry, love of human connection, and sometimes a healthy dose of creative thinking are the keys to success in the dental field. Dr. Brittan enjoys educating her community about dental health and how it can significantly impact a person's life. She recently led a successful campaign in Abilene to save the fluoridation of her community's water after the city commission voted to halt water fluoridation. With fluoridation restored in her community, she continues to advocate for her patients and serve as an active member in many local organizations.
- **Deb Pochop** is the CEO of Northwest Smile Center, formerly known as Rawlins County Dental Clinic, a non-profit, safety-net dental clinic located in the far northwest corner of Kansas. The clinic serves over 15 counties across Kansas, as well as parts of Nebraska and Colorado, and its outreach program spans 56 locations in 13 counties—a land mass comparable to the size of Massachusetts and Delaware combined—providing preventive oral healthcare. Rawlins County itself is a frontier community with a population of just 2,561. With more than 40 years of experience in healthcare and 8 years as CEO, Deb is dedicated to connecting people with essential resources and advocating for underserved populations in rural Kansas. She has also been a member of the Oral Health Kansas Board for nearly a year.
- **Kevin Robertson** has been the executive director of the Kansas Dental Association since 1997. Under his leadership the KDA established the Kansas Dental Charitable Foundation and began the Kansas Mission of Mercy project in 2003. As KDA Executive Director and a member of the Kansas Dental Charitable Foundation Board of Trustees, he has worked with dental leaders to expand the MOM concept to Iowa, Colorado, Nebraska, Missouri, Minnesota, Arkansas and other states. Born and raised in Omaha, Nebraska, Kevin earned undergraduate and graduate degrees in Public Administration from the University of Kansas. Kevin has held several leadership positions within his profession, church, and community. Among those, he is a Past President of the Kansas Society of Association Executives and was the Society's 2003 Outstanding Executive of the Year. Kevin is a founding member and current Board member of Oral Health Kansas, was an inaugural member of OHK's Dental Champions leadership program and was the 2016 recipient of the Outstanding Dental Champion Award. Kevin and his wife Carissa live in Topeka.

### **Veterans Oral Health: National and State Perspectives**

- **Dr. Kent Haverkamp** has served as Medical Director for Medical Review and Medical Policy at Blue Cross Blue Shield Kansas (BCBSKS) for the past 10 years. Previously he spent 20 years as a Primary Care Physician providing Internal Medicine and Pediatric care at a busy Multi Specialty clinic in Topeka, Kansas. He has a BS

from Kansas State University and is a graduate of the University of Kansas School of Medicine. He completed residency training at Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center/Phoenix Children's Hospital in Phoenix, Arizona. He is Board Certified in both Internal Medicine and Pediatrics.

- **Dr. Annaliese Cothron (she/her)** is the Co-Founder and Executive Director of the American Institute of Dental Public Health (AIDPH) where she works to fulfill AIDPH's vision of a justice-oriented oral health system. Justice and equity is at the core of Dr. Cothron's personal and professional work, serving as a board member for Equality Texas and the iFLOSS Illinois Oral Health Coalition while supporting the Oral Health Progress and Equity Network as the Advocacy Committee Lead. Dr. Cothron received her Doctor of Health Sciences (DHSc) from A.T. Still University in Leadership and Organizational Behavior and Master of Science from Mississippi State University, specializing in Experimental Psychology with a theme in Applied Statistics. Dr. Cothron is credentialed as Certified in Public Health and has a certificate in nonprofit management and fundraising from Our Lady of the Lake University.
- **Hunter Thompson** is a Professional Staff Member for the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee minority team. His portfolio includes issues within the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) including workforce, dental, long-term care, homelessness, quality/patient safety, and more. Before joining the committee in the spring of 2023, Hunter spent more than four years working for Senator Bill Cassidy (R-LA) covering issues within the Veterans Affairs, Finance, and Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions committees. He grew up in the Dallas/Ft. Worth (DFW) area before attending the University of Arkansas where he graduated with a degree in Political Science.

### **Integrating Dental Care in Kansas Medical Clinics**

- A clinical dental hygienist for 33 years, **Kathy Hunt** began her work in public health in 2004 when she took advantage of a new expanded dental practice act to design the first system in Kansas that provided preventive dental care in schools, Head Starts, and health departments. She was also instrumental in developing, implementing, and directing a dental safety net clinic in her local community of Wamego. Hunt served as Project Director for Kansas Cavity Free Kids, a Kansas Head Start Association oral health project, for 8 years. She is co-author of several oral health resource materials focused on families with young children and works as a tireless advocate for the oral health needs of pregnant women and children birth to five. She has served as Oral Health Kansas' Dental program Director since 2015, leading the organization's educational programming.
- **Crystal Behanna** has worked at the rural Graham County Health Department for four years. She is involved in many programs including being the WIC Clerk and Breast-Feeding Peer counselor for two counties. She is involved in all things Public Health for her community, including also working as a CNA at the local hospital, a volunteer EMT, and a CPR and Safe Sleep Instructor. She is currently a KSU student, working towards her Master of Public Health with an emphasis in Infectious

Diseases and Zoonoses. She is also the proud mother of her 11-year-old son, Tuff, who is a Cerebral Palsy warrior and Kansas Special Olympics athlete.

- **Dr. Amanda Hartman** is an Assistant Professor in the Doctor of Nursing Practice program at Washburn University where she delivers primary care didactic and clinical courses as well as coordinating simulation and skills/office procedures content for Family Nurse Practitioner students. Additionally, she maintains a clinical practice as board certified family nurse practitioner at the Washburn University Student Health Services and Pine Ridge Family Health Center, in Topeka, Kansas.

### **Lived Experience Improves Dental Care for People with Disabilities**

- **Dr. MaryAnne Lynch Small** is a recent graduate from the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University with a background in clinical dentistry and health advocacy. Upon graduating with a Bachelor of Dental Surgery degree (BDS) from Dundee University in her home country of Scotland, MaryAnne practiced as a primary care dentist for a period of over five years. Her time in clinical practice cemented her desire to expand her knowledge and skills in public health to drive for oral health equity among marginalized populations- an inequity highly evident in MaryAnne's place of work in Glasgow, Scotland. Since 2022 she has served as Oral Health Kansas' Medicaid Projects Manager and led our Pathways to Oral Health and Sedation Dental Care Task Force.
- **Dr. Lynzee A. Cornell** is the Chief Executive Officer at the Lee Specialty Clinic and an Associate Clinical Professor with the University of Louisville, in Louisville, Kentucky. Previously, she was the Division Chief of Communicative Disorders, Program and Clinic Director in Audiology and the Director of the Newborn Hearing Screening Program at the University of Louisville School of Medicine. Dr. Cornell currently serves as a Co-Director for Healthy Hearing Special Olympics Kentucky and is actively engaged in community outreach and education.
- **Dr. Camila DiGiorgio** graduated from the University of São Paulo in 2003. She practiced in São Paulo inside a multidisciplinary clinic for a decade, focusing on treating patients with special needs before moving to the USA. She specialized in Functional MaxilloFacial Orthopedics in Brazil. Upon moving to the USA, she completed 2 years of AEGD at Lee Specialty Clinic, an NYU residency site exclusively for patients with IDD. She earned her DDS from NYU in 2017 and became a dental consultant at Lee Specialty Clinic from October 2023 to February 2024. Since March 2024, she has been the Dental Director at Lee Specialty Clinic.
- **Kathy Keck** has over 30 years' experience in the field of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities both professionally and personally. Her passion led her to be a foster parent and adoptive mom with 5 children. Three of her children have complex medical and developmental needs. Kathy has a Bachelor of Science from Emporia State in Rehabilitation Services Education. Her Master's Degree in Business Administration with an emphasis in Change Management from Friends University. Kathy's professional experience at the state level in various roles at SRS, KDADS and DCF equip her with an understanding of various systems that impact people with

disabilities. This experience allows her a unique ability to navigate these systems and work toward systems improvements. She is a strong advocate at the local and state level. She has testified frequently at the Kansas Legislature on issues regarding dental benefits, the care crisis and services related to keeping people in their home. She has volunteered in a variety of roles including: the Chair of the Kansas Council on Developmental Disabilities, Kansas Department of Health and Environment Family Advisory Committee as well as a Children's Mercy Hospital on the Tracheostomy Parent and Family Advisory Committee (PFAC) and the Parents Offering Support (POPS) volunteer. She is always willing to help other special needs families on their journeys.

- **Jacob Perron** graduated from Washburn Rural High School in 2018. He has volunteered at the Kansas Discovery Center for the past 2 years. He participates in day services with Exploring Life Services where he enjoys being active in the community, doing craft projects and hanging out with his friends. He loves cars and you can find him at a variety of car shows or in the garage helping his brother and dad work on his 1966 mustang. When he is not enjoying cars, he advocates with his mom to help others understand the challenges that he faces due to his multiple disabilities. Jacob was instrumental in sharing his dental story at a National Conference with Families USA in 2023. Jacob is patient helping people learn how to interact with him and others who are neurodivergent.
- **Deb Pochop** is the CEO of Northwest Smile Center, formerly known as Rawlins County Dental Clinic, a non-profit, safety-net dental clinic located in the far northwest corner of Kansas. The clinic serves over 15 counties across Kansas, as well as parts of Nebraska and Colorado, and its outreach program spans 56 locations in 13 counties—a land mass comparable to the size of Massachusetts and Delaware combined—providing preventive oral healthcare. Rawlins County itself is a frontier community with a population of just 2,561. With more than 40 years of experience in healthcare and 8 years as CEO, Deb is dedicated to connecting people with essential resources and advocating for underserved populations in rural Kansas. She has also been a member of the Oral Health Kansas Board for nearly a year.
- **Tammy Vicin** is the full-time caregiver and advocate for younger brother **Jim Woods**. Striving to make an impact for him and all others in the special needs community, especially those like Jim, who are dealing with obstacles and barriers to receive the dental care they so desperately need is her passion in life. She has been an advocate with Oral Health Kansas for a number of years and serves on their Lived Experience Advisory Group.