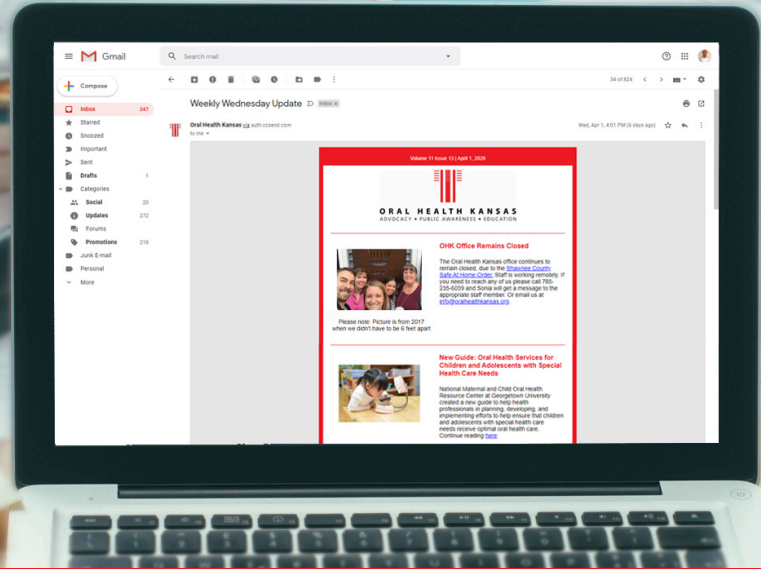




WEEKLY WEDNESDAY UPDATE

The Weekly Wednesday Update is our newsletter which we email every Wednesday with oral health, health and policy updates from around the state and nationally.

To view past issues [click here](#).

October 7, 2026

Volume 17, Issue 39

Scan the QR code



or click here to
sign up for our
[Weekly
Wednesday
Update](#).



Sign Up and Share Your Products

Sign up to exhibit at our annual Conference on Oral Health for Friday, November 13. Our conference is unique because it not only brings together dental professionals but also community leaders, advocates, legislators, dental students, dental hygiene students, professors and so many more! This is an opportunity to reach these folks and share what resources, marketing products or jobs you have to offer. Attendees will have a Bingo card and have the chance to meet with every exhibitor.

An exhibitor registration allows you the benefits below:

- Two complimentary spots with access to all conference sessions and meal functions and speakers
- A 5-foot undraped table in exhibitor hallway with two chairs
- Complimentary internet access

Exhibitors will be positioned near participants all day for full exposure. Spots are limited. Sign up now! Find more information on our [conference page](#). For questions, email Sonia at solmos@oralhealthkansas.org.



Countdown to the Conference on Oral Health

We're now a little over a month away from the Conference on Oral Health. Join us in person on Friday, November 13 at the KU Edwards Campus as we are joined by exhilarating speakers! Meet with individuals all around Kansas and surrounding states who are working to improve the health of our Kansans! You do not need to be a dental professional to attend.

Attend all day and earn up to 7.25 CE's.

(schedule is subject to change)

Oral Health Policy and Election Update

Speakers: Dr. Stuart Little, PhD, Little Government Relations

Three Breakout Opportunities:

- **Enhancing Patient-Centered Care with the My Dental Care Passport & Sensory Modifications Guide**
Speakers: Dr. MaryAnne Lynch Small, MPH, BDS, Oral Health Kansas; Abby Richwine, RDH, BS, Oral Health Kansas; Deb Pochop, Northwest Smile Center; Billie Donohue, CDA, Rogers Family Dentistry; Shelley Howard, RDH, BS DH, MHSA, UMKC School of Dentistry
- **Resilience, Well-Being, and Success in the Workplace** Speaker: Jody J. Fiorini, PhD, LCPC-S, NCC, ACS, Professor of Counseling
Coordinator of the PhD in Education & Behavioral Studies - Clinical Counselor Education & Supervision track, Intervention Services & Leadership in Education (ISLE)
- **Building Your Advocacy Skills** Speakers: Little Government Relations

Keynote Speaker: Shifting the Narrative: Amplifying Voices

Whit Downing, Kansas Council on Developmental Disabilities

AI in Dentistry

Speaker: Tatiana Y. Lin, Kansas Health Institute

The State of Dental Practice: Costs, Insurance, and Access

Speaker: Deesha Bhaumik, PhD, MS American Dental Association Health Policy Institute

Attention sponsors! We're still looking for sponsors! Sponsorship puts a brand's name in front of our

participants through signage, printed materials, verbal recognition throughout the conference and the event website. Show participants you are invested in improving the oral health of Kansas. Find sponsorship opportunities and more information on our [conference website](#).

Conference attendee registration fees:

Regular Attendee Rate: \$125 | Walk-in Attendee Rate: \$150

Regular Student Rate: \$20 | Walk-in Student Rate: \$25

Register [here](#)! If you do not have an account with the Iris conference platform, you will need to create an account.

Hotel Information: We have a hotel block at Courtyard by Marriott Kansas City Olathe 141.00 USD - 149.00 USD per night. Book your room at [this link](#). Last day to book is Thursday, October 29, 2026.



Executive Director Testifies at KanCare Oversight Committee

On Tuesday, October 6, Executive Director, Brooks Roberston, testified during the KanCare Oversight Committee. You can read Brooks full testimony [here](#).

Brooks thanked the committee for the Medicaid dental rate increase that will go into effect this fall. Between July 2025 and June 2026, Kansas had a net gain of 45 Medicaid dental providers, with the greatest gains coming after that previous rate increase. Although this is pleasing, finding a dentist with availability is still difficult. Some have waiting lists for over a year. There's still work to do! We are grateful for this year's dental rate increase but are prepared to ask for another increase next year! Watch for an opportunity to sign up to support another Medicaid dental rate increase in 2027.

The Oral Health Kansas board of directors approved our 2027 Public Policy Priorities to include advocating for another Medicaid dental rate increase. View our Public Policy Priorities [here](#). If you have any questions, email Brooks at brobertson@oralhealthkansas.org.



Register for Next Week's Webinar

Join us for our next webinar coming up next week on **Tuesday, October 13 at 12:00pm CST**. During the **Kansas Medicaid: New Rates and Provider Perspectives** webinar, we talk about the Kansas Medicaid dental rates and what they mean for providers and access to care. We'll share results from the provider rate survey, including the priorities and concerns voiced by Kansas dental providers. The rate increase represents an important investment in oral health access during a challenging budget year and reflects Kansas Legislature's commitment to preserving the progress that has been made.

This webinar highlights the collaborative efforts underway to listen to providers and use their voices to help strengthen the Medicaid dental system.

Click [here](#) to register. This is a great opportunity for one free CE.



Mental Health Awareness Week

This week is Mental Health Awareness Week. In today's world, we're running from one point to another. Workdays, kids' sports, trying to find time for your family and barely trying to find time for yourself. For providers and their private practice, they are the doctor, the helper, the front desk and everything in between. We know how difficult it can be!

At our Conference on Oral Health, November 13, Jody J. Fiorini, Professor, Ph.D. Program Co-coordinator at Wichita State University, will be doing a breakout session for dental professionals on **Resilience, Well-Being, and Success in the Workplace**. This session will be useful for anyone that is feeling burned out, stressed and needs some helpful tips! You can find more information about the conference [here](#).

Saturday, October 10 is World Mental Health Day. Mental illness and oral health affect each other in both directions. A poor mental health can lead to poor oral health, and poor oral health can, in turn, worsen mental health and quality of life. Self-care, which includes brushing your teeth, can often be difficult. Getting up and going to the bathroom is a step to help you get started. Visible dental problems affect self-esteem and social confidence, which can worsen symptoms of depression, anxiety, or social withdrawal. Make small (but big) steps to maintain your oral health.

- Brush at least twice a day with fluoride toothpaste
- Floss daily
- Limit sugary snacks and beverages that can cause acid attacks to your teeth.
- Drink water!

Find more helpful tips on our [Consumer Resources page](#).

[NAMI Kansas](#) is an organization that provides resources for individuals, families and caregivers whose lives have been affected by mental health conditions.

Make Your Vote Count This November

November 3, 2026, is the day to vote in the General Election. Races include governor, a U.S. Senate seat, and other statewide offices. Are you prepared to vote? If you are not registered to vote, you will not be able to vote. October 13 is the deadline to register (or update your registration) for the November 3



General Election. If you've moved, changed your name, or just want to confirm you're registered, find your polling place or view your sample ballot, click [here](#).

To register to vote in Kansas, you must be:

- A U.S. citizen
- A resident of Kansas
- At least 18 years old by Election Day (17-year-olds can pre-register if they turn 18 by the next general election)

On the day you are voting, make sure you bring an identification card. State law requires Kansas voters to show photographic identification when casting a vote in person.

Do your research! Before voting, familiarize yourself with a sample ballot. Most voters know who they're voting for in high-profile races (governor, U.S. Senate) but forget about ballot items such as local school board, county commissioner, judicial retention, or ballot questions. Flag those unfamiliar sections first, since they take the most time to research and do your studying!

If you plan to vote in person, polls will be open from 7:00am-7:30pm in Kansas on Tuesday, November 3.



Sharing Resources at the CDDO Exhibit

On Thursday, October 1, Education Manager, Abby Richwine, exhibited at the 2026 Johnson County Community Developmental Disabilities Organization (CDDO) Resource Fair at the Johnson County Arts & Heritage Center, alongside community organizations.

CDDO's play an important role in the community by helping individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families navigate available services and support. CDDOs connect individuals to resources, assist with accessing needed services, and help coordinate supports that promote independence, inclusion, and quality of life. Because of their connection to individuals with disabilities, families, caregivers, and service providers, CDDOs are an important partner in improving access to health and dental care.

During the resource fair, Abby connected with nearly 60 families, caregivers, and organizations who were interested in learning more about oral health, dental care, and resources available to individuals with disabilities. She shared information about Oral Health Kansas and the Pathways to Oral Health project, including the My Dental Care Passport, consumer resources, and tools to help individuals and caregivers navigate dental care. The event provided an opportunity to build relationships with families and community partners while increasing awareness of the importance of accessible dental care and the resources available to support better oral health for individuals with disabilities.



Primary Care Week: Where Medical and Dental Care Meet

National Primary Care Week runs October 5 - 9. Sponsored by the American Medical Student Association the week brings together students, physicians, and advocates to celebrate the essential role primary care plays in community health and to spotlight the challenges and opportunities facing the field. Primary care and oral health are more connected than they're often treated. Medical-dental

integration is when primary care providers screen for oral health issues, refer patients to dental care, or even provide basic preventive services like fluoride varnish. It is an increasingly important strategy for reaching patients who may not otherwise see a dentist regularly.

The 100 Million Mouths Campaign (100MMC) bridges gaps in oral health access by training 50 oral health education champions in each state, to integrate sustainable, equity-driven oral health curricula into health profession schools. These champions collaborate with medical, nursing, and residency programs to empower future primary care providers to improve the oral health of 100 million people over the next decade. In Kansas, Oral Health Kansas staff member, Kathy Hunt was the Champion for our state and now Education Manager, Abby Richwine, leads that role. Oral Health Kansas works with medical schools, nurse practitioners and physician assistants to help equip providers to address oral health challenges. The groups have demonstrated a strong willingness to learn and explore ways to integrate medical and dental care.



Upcoming Events

- Self paced courses: [Providing Oral Health Care to Autistic Individuals](#) and [Caring for Individuals with Disabilities: Practical Considerations for Dental Providers](#).
- **Webinar:** Rutgers University offering Perinatal Oral Health ECHO Series webinar. Check out the list of series [here](#).
- **Webinar:** Medicare: Expansion of Dental Services, hosted by CareQuest Institute for Oral Health on October 8 at 6:00pm CST. Register [here](#).
- **Webinar:** Next Making Medicaid Work for You webinar series is on October 13 at 12:00pm. Registration information coming soon.
- **Webinar:** Substance Use Disorders and Dentistry, hosted by CareQuest Institute for Oral Health on October 22 at 6:00pm CST. Register [here](#).
- **Event:** Community Care Network of Kansas annual conference, September 23-25 in Manhattan, Kansas. Learn more [here](#).
- **Event:** Kansas Public Health Association Conference, October 5 - 6, 2026 in Manhattan. Click [here](#) for information.
- **Event:** 2026 Conference on Oral Health will be Friday, November 13 at the KU Edwards Campus in Overland Park. Click [here](#) for information.



We wanted to send a big THANK YOU to our conference planners from Wichita State University. Lauren Fontarum, Riley Walker and James Brewster who have been keeping the balls rolling for us and keeping our heads on straight. If you see one of them reach out to you in regard to your registration, please know they're communicating on our behalf. You will have the chance to meet some of them at our conference in November!



Sugary Drink Display

We have Adult and Children's Sugary Drink Display's available for reservations. These displays are eye catching at exhibits, schools, library, dental offices, clinics and just about anywhere you see them! We only have a limited amount so please sign up soon if you're interested in reserving one. Click [here](#) to learn more about sugary drink display reservations!

Follow Us



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