

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](#).

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Mourning the Loss of an Advocate

Over the weekend we lost an advocate who brought a lot of joy to everyone around him. [Jacob Perron](#) and his mom Kathy Keck have been long-time advocates for disabilities services and dental care at the Kansas Statehouse. Three years ago our partners at Families USA featured their advocacy story in a [video](#) demonstrating the power of consumer and family advocacy in oral health. Their video, “Why we need to fill gaps in Medicaid dental coverage,” premiered at Families USA’s conference in Washington,

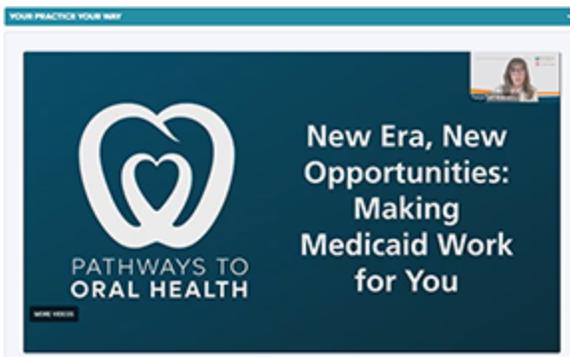
and Jacob and Kathy were there to share their story. Oral Health Kansas enjoyed working with and learning from Jacob. His infectious smile and joy will be missed. We send our deepest sympathies to Jacob's family.



Legislative Testimony from Oral Health Kansas

This week Oral Health Kansas provided [testimony](#) on two bills before the Kansas Legislature. [HB 2783](#) would increase the tax on e-cigarettes from 5 cents to 15 cents, and the revenue would be deposited into the Children's Initiative Fund. The Fund was created from the Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement in 1999 and is a core funding source for Kansas early childhood, health, and child welfare programs. Nearly half of high school students have used e-cigarettes, and that number has steadily risen over the past several years. Raising the tax on e-cigarettes would not only deter use among Kansas youth but also raise much needed revenue for the Children's Initiative Fund.

We also provided testimony in support of [SB 271](#), which fixes an error in how eligibility for the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) is calculated. The current law defines CHIP eligibility as 250% of the 2008 federal poverty level, and this bill would change that to the current federal poverty level. Oral Health Kansas supports this change that would ensure all Kansas children who are eligible for CHIP are able to access that health insurance program.



Free Webinar for Providers

You can now watch the second session in the "New Era, New Opportunities" Making Medicaid Work for You" webinar series. Your Practice, Your Way, is just that! This webinar will give you some ideas on the best way for your office to accept Medicaid and what changes you can make. Your office will still be designed how you want it while accepting more patients and that includes creating new policies if you wish. Now with dental rate increases, Medicaid can become a payor for your dental office. Want to learn more? [Watch](#) this short, 30 minute webinar.

If you have any questions, you can email us at info@oralhealthkansas.org. We may not be able to answer all of your questions, but we'll help you find an answer!



OHK Staff Exhibit at Conference for Children with Disabilities

Education Coordinator, Abby Richwine, and Project Manager, Monica Turner, had an exhibit table at the Kansas Division for Early Childhood Conference where they shared resources and had great conversations about the [Brush Book Bed](#) program. Educators were eager to hear more and how they could incorporate the program into their work. Staff also shared children's oral health book ideas for what educators can use to teach about taking care of their oral health. You can learn more about Brush Book Bed [here](#).



Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month

Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month is observed every March to highlight the experiences, rights, and contributions of people with developmental disabilities and to push for inclusion, accessibility, and equity in everyday life. The Pathways to Oral Health Project was dreamed up by staff and families as an opportunity to support families and caregivers of children and individuals with disabilities by helping them find compassionate, accessible dental care. Many people with developmental disabilities face barriers to oral health services, from sensory sensitivities to a lack of trained providers. By raising awareness, Pathways can connect families to dental professionals who understand these unique needs, promote inclusive practices, and ensure that everyone regardless of ability has access to quality, respectful dental care that supports overall health and well-being.

The [My Dental Care Passport](#) is a tool that individuals use to share about themselves, their disability, what makes them anxious, etc. so the dental provider knows ahead of time what to do to make the dental appointment comfortable. The My Dental Care Passport website includes instructions on how both consumers and dental providers can use the My Dental Care Passport.



Kansas Mission of Mercy
Making a Difference

2027 Kansas Mission of Mercy

The Kansas Dental Association and the Kansas Dental Charitable Foundation have announced the location for the 2027 Kansas Mission of Mercy. They're happy to announce in Kansas City, Kansas on January 29-30, 2027, at Homefield KCK

Showcase Center. This will be the 26th Kansas Mission of Mercy! You can find more information here <https://www.ksdentalfoundation.org/>



Upcoming Events

- Course: An Introduction to Value-Based Care in Oral Health: Moving from Volume to Value, 1 CE. Click [here](#) for the course information.
- Self paced courses: [Providing Oral Health Care to Autistic Individuals](#) and [Caring for Individuals with Disabilities: Practical Considerations for Dental Providers](#).
- Dental Clinic Leadership Conference co-hosted by Community Care Network of Kansas and the Health Center Association of Nebraska on April 9 - April 10 in Manhattan. Learn more [here](#).
- Save the date! The 2026 Conference on Oral Health will be Friday, November 13.



Pathways to Oral Health Project staff, Monica Turner, celebrated her one-year anniversary as Project Manager for Pathways on February 17. She has been a stellar addition to our staff, keeping us in line with the work plan, monitoring our timeliness and goals, as well as communicating with our Pathways partners. We would not have been able to keep the project aligned if it wasn't for her guiding us all the way. Thank you, Monica!



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!

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