

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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Excellence in Oral Health Awards Are Now Open

We are thrilled to announce that nominations for the Excellence in Oral Health Awards are officially open! It is time to recognize the outstanding contributions of Kansas who have demonstrated excellence in oral health. There are two opportunities for nominations: The Excellence in Oral Health Award and the Ron Alexander Outstanding Dental Champion Award. The Ron Alexander Outstanding Dental Champion

Award is designed to recognize the outstanding work a Dental Champion has done as a direct result of participating in the Dental Champions Leadership Program.

The award winners will be announced at the Conference on Oral Health at the KU Edwards Campus on Friday, November 13. We are hopeful award winners are able to attend.

For nomination award info and to view the past award winners, visit the Excellence in Oral Health Award [webpage](#). The deadline to submit nominations is Friday, August 28 by 5:00pm.



OHK Meets with Home Visitors

Although it was April Fools Day, we are not kidding when we say we learned so much from the USD 501 Parents as Teachers (PAT) staff meeting. Oral Health Kansas was invited to join home visitors during their staff meeting to demonstrate what happens to our teeth when we eat sugary foods or consume sugary drinks. The home visitors were amazed to hear that if you “sip all day, get tooth decay”. That’s right! One sip of a sugary drink causes an acid attack to your teeth for 20 minutes. Each time you sip, it’s a 20-minute attack. That’s why we suggest you shouldn’t sip all day. If you’re going to drink a sugary drink, drink it all at once. If you’re going to eat a food that contains sugar, eat it at once and also drink water to swish the food particles from your mouth.

Veronica Byrd, PAT staff and former OHK board member, demonstrated the sugary drink display to the home visitors. They were to guess which drink went with the jar filled with certain sugar amounts. We were impressed on how well they guessed correctly! They definitely know what they’re doing. Home visitors had great questions and were excited to take the information back to their families. We appreciate the opportunity to visit with everyone and share what oral health resources they can give to their families.

Do you want to see what happens during an acid attack? Watch [this video](#) for an acid attack demonstration.



Oral Health Kansas is Looking for the Next Person to Lead the Organization

As we are sharing our excitement that Tanya Dorf Brunner, Executive Director, will be taking on a new role as Executive Director of the American Network of Oral Health Coalitions, we’re also eager to find the next person who will continue to lead Oral Health Kansas to it’s greatest achievements. The

Executive Director will be full time in Kansas and to advance our mission to improve oral health statewide through advocacy, systems change, and coalition building. The role calls for someone who cares deeply about the purpose of Oral Health Kansas, works well with others, can turn ideas into real results, and helps create a welcoming and supportive environment for everyone. The Executive Director will steward strong legislative, funder, and community partnerships, support staff, and guide sustainable statewide growth. Although this position offers flexible remote work, the individual must also be flexible in understanding that circumstances and deadlines change quite often! The position provides optional Topeka office use and occasional in-person meetings, events, and legislative engagement. This person must also comprehend managing organizational operations, budgets, and staff.

Those interested in applying can access the full job description as well as apply [here](#). To apply, you will also need to include a Cover Letter, Resume, and a professional writing sample. The sample can be a strategic presentation, published article, policy brief, grant proposal, media release, or similar work that reflects your leadership and communication style.

If you have any questions about the position, please call HR Partners (785) 233-7860.

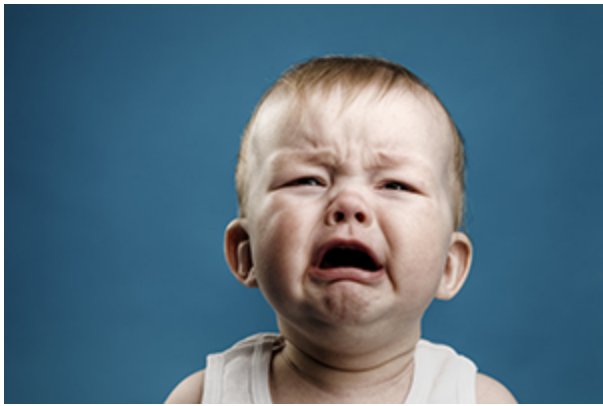


National Public Health Week Begins

[National Public Health Week](#) is celebrated April 6 - April 12. It's a moment to celebrate the impact of public health and spotlight priority issues that can improve our nation's well-being. During National Public Health Week, we recognize the vital role oral health plays in our overall well-being. Good oral health is essential to prevention, early detection, and improved quality of life, making it a key part of strong, healthy communities. When we have poor oral health, it contributes to many health issues in the rest of the body.

- Conditions like gum disease or periodontal disease can cause chronic inflammation, which has been linked to heart disease and stroke.
- Poor oral health is associated with conditions like diabetes, and the two can make each other worse. Click [here](#) for the Tips and Tricks for Diabetes and Oral Health to learn more about how diabetes affects your oral health.
- Bacteria from the mouth can be inhaled into the lungs, potentially leading to infections like pneumonia.
- Gum disease has been linked to premature birth and low birth weight. [Read more](#) on the Tips and Tricks for Pregnancy, Gum Disease and Diabetes.
- Painful teeth or missing teeth can make it difficult to eat a balanced diet, affecting overall nutrition.
- Oral health affects speech, confidence, and daily comfort. Individuals have reported not feeling confident when interviewing for jobs if their mouth and teeth are not healthy.

For more Tips and Tricks, [visit our website](#).



Child Abuse Prevention Month

April is National Child Abuse Prevention (CAP) Month, a time when communities across the country come together to strengthen families and prevent child abuse and neglect before it occurs. Thanks to the [Kansas Children's Service League \(KCSL\)](#), the Pinwheels of Possibility campaign celebrates the limitless potential of children and families when communities rally around them. Throughout CAP Month, KCSL will spotlight the

power of early, ongoing support through digital storytelling, events and activations across the state.

Oral health professionals play a critical role in recognizing signs of child abuse and neglect, as many injuries occur in the head, face, and mouth. Unexplained bruising, lacerations, burns, or untreated dental issues may be indicators of harm or neglect. Early identification and appropriate reporting can help protect children and connect them with the care and support they need.

Protecting children's health includes recognizing that oral injuries and untreated dental conditions can be signs of abuse or neglect. Raising awareness and supporting early intervention are key to keeping children safe.



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](#).

- **Webinar:** Medical-Dental Integration 101, April 9 from 6 - 7 p.m. CST. Register [here](#).
- Rutgers University offering Perinatal Oral Health ECHO Series. Check out the list of series [here](#).
- Save the date! The 2026 Conference on Oral Health will be Friday, November 13 at the KU Edwards Campus.

This week, Abby Richwine, Education Coordinator, presented at the Children's Mercy Autism Parent and Caregiver Conference, where she both hosted an exhibit and led a breakout session for families. At her exhibit, she shared a wide range of Pathways to Oral Health resources designed to support individuals



with autism and their caregivers. She also delivered a presentation titled “Gentle Routines, Bright Smiles: Oral Care for Autism” to 52 participants. During the session, Abby discussed what daily oral home care can look like and introduced practical tools to make routines more

manageable. She highlighted resources such as the Confidence in Every Smile video series, helping caregivers feel more confident in supporting their loved one’s oral health.



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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