



PATHWAYS TO  
**ORAL HEALTH**

Behind the  
Curtain: How  
Dental Advocacy  
Creates Change

# New Era, New Opportunities Webinar Series

August 11, 2026

Behind the Curtain: How Dental Advocacy Creates Change



# New Era, New Opportunities Webinar Series



*This project is funded by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment –  
Division of Health Care Finance (KDHE-DHCF) and ARPA.*

## Logistics

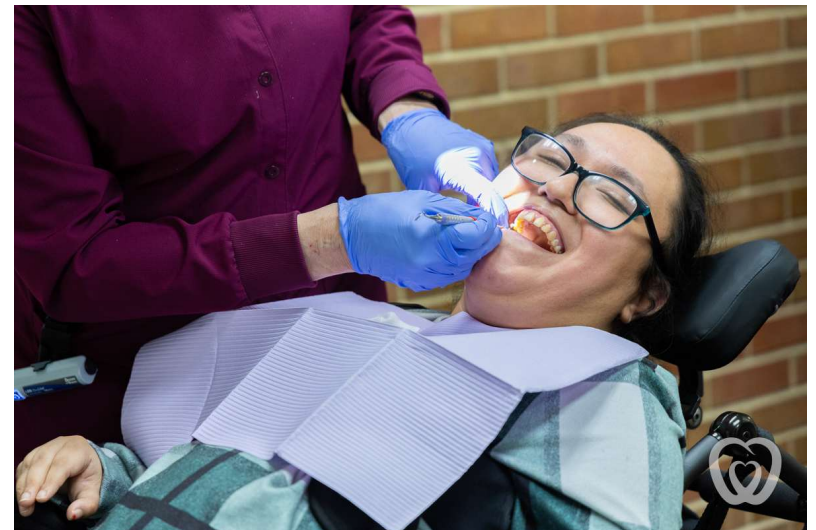
- Please use the chat box to ask questions throughout today's webinar
  - If you have any questions or run into any technical problems, please use the Chat or email [info@oralhealthkansas.org](mailto:info@oralhealthkansas.org)
  - There will be a total of 1 dental CEs available for participating in this webinar
  - If you need CEs, please put your name and email address in the Chat
  - CE certificates will be sent within the next couple of weeks.
  - The recording and slides will be available on our [website](#)
- 



# PATHWAYS TO ORAL HEALTH

— A PROJECT OF ORAL HEALTH KANSAS —

- Support for dental professionals in being successful Medicaid providers
- Education programs for dental professionals and people with disabilities
- Communication tools to break down barriers: My Dental Care Passport



**Join us in making dental care more accessible and equitable for all.**



# Today's agenda

- Brief overview of Oral Health Kansas
- Advocacy & why it matters
- Overview of the Legislative process & why it matters to dental teams
- Examples of successful advocacy efforts and how we can support you in your advocacy efforts



# Who is Oral Health Kansas?

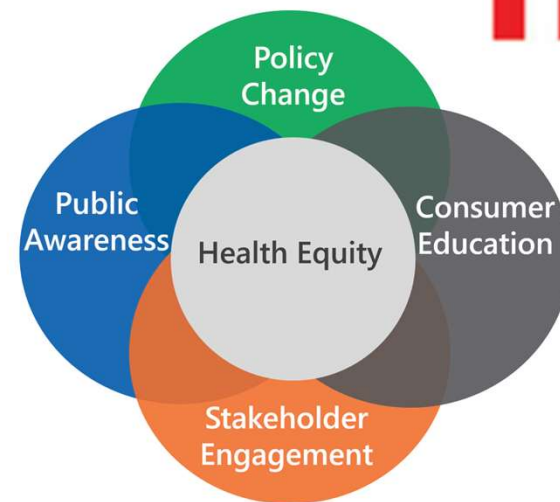
## State Oral Health Coalition

### Mission:

- To improve oral health in Kansas through advocacy, public awareness, and education

### Vision:

- Kansas is a national leader in oral health education, prevention, and treatment



## Poll Question

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At this moment, how familiar are you with how changes are made to the Kansas Medicaid dental program?

- a. Very familiar
  - b. Somewhat familiar
  - c. I know bits and pieces
  - d. I have no idea
- 

# Why it Matters

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Can I really  
make a  
difference in the  
SYSTEM?

## Poll Question

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At this moment, do you consider yourself an advocate?

- a. Yes
- b. No



# Advocacy

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**Successes**

**Patient stories**

**Billing  
Challenges**

**Ideas**

**Solutions**

**Small business  
challenges**

**Personal Stories**



Your experience informs better decisions.

# Advocacy

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## Kansas Providers Sharing Their Story

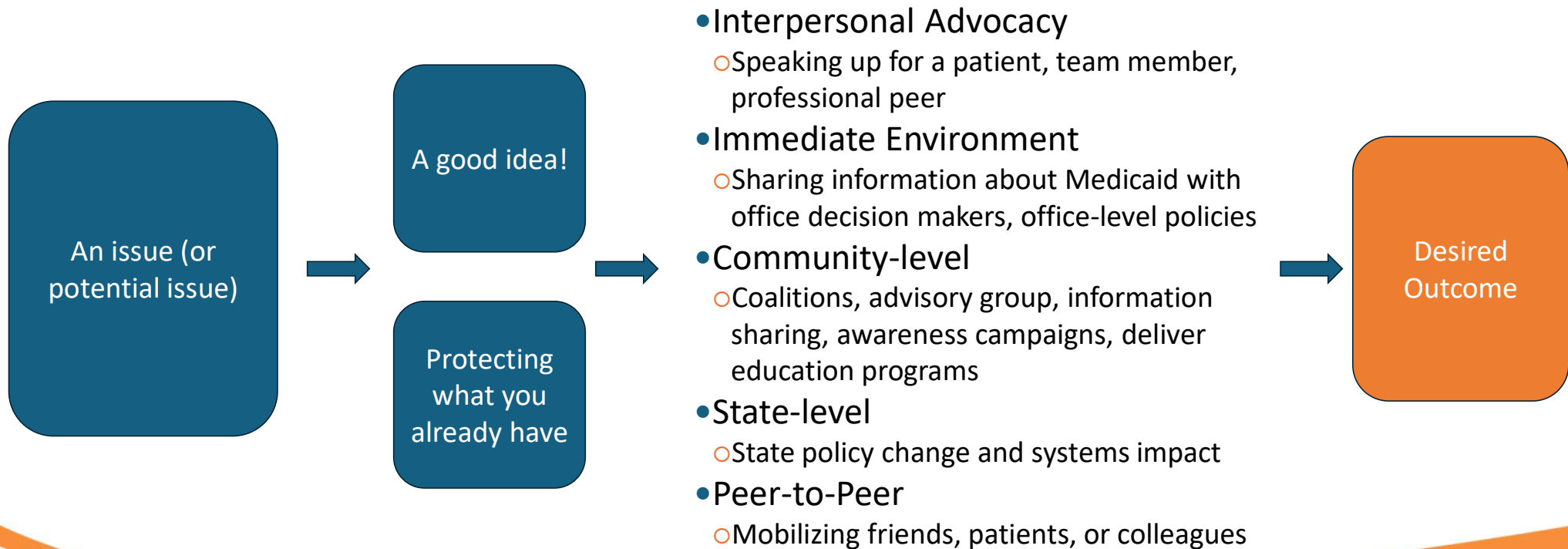
- Dr. Lisa Thurlow- 2022 Adult Dental Medicaid coverage
- Dr. Beatrice Brittan- 2024 Abilene, KS Fluoride
- Dr. Nick Rogers- 2024 Sedation dental care
- Dr. John Fales- 2024 Sedation dental care
- Dr. Jill Jenkins- Medicaid dental rate increase

# Advocacy

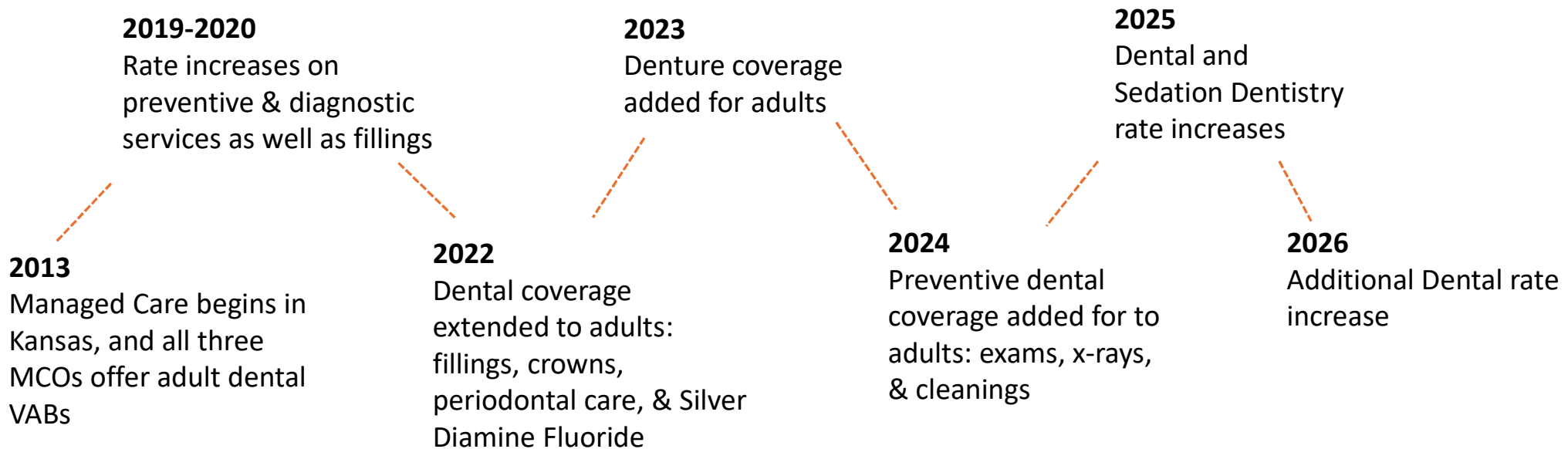
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# What Does Advocacy Look Like?



# Improvements in Kansas Medicaid dental coverage



**\$32.4 million added to the Kansas Medicaid dental program in six years.**

Visit Oral Health Kansas' Medicaid adult dental benefit webpage to learn more and find fact sheets for consumers and providers

<http://oralhealthkansas.org/MedicaidAdultDentalBenefits.html>

## Poll Question

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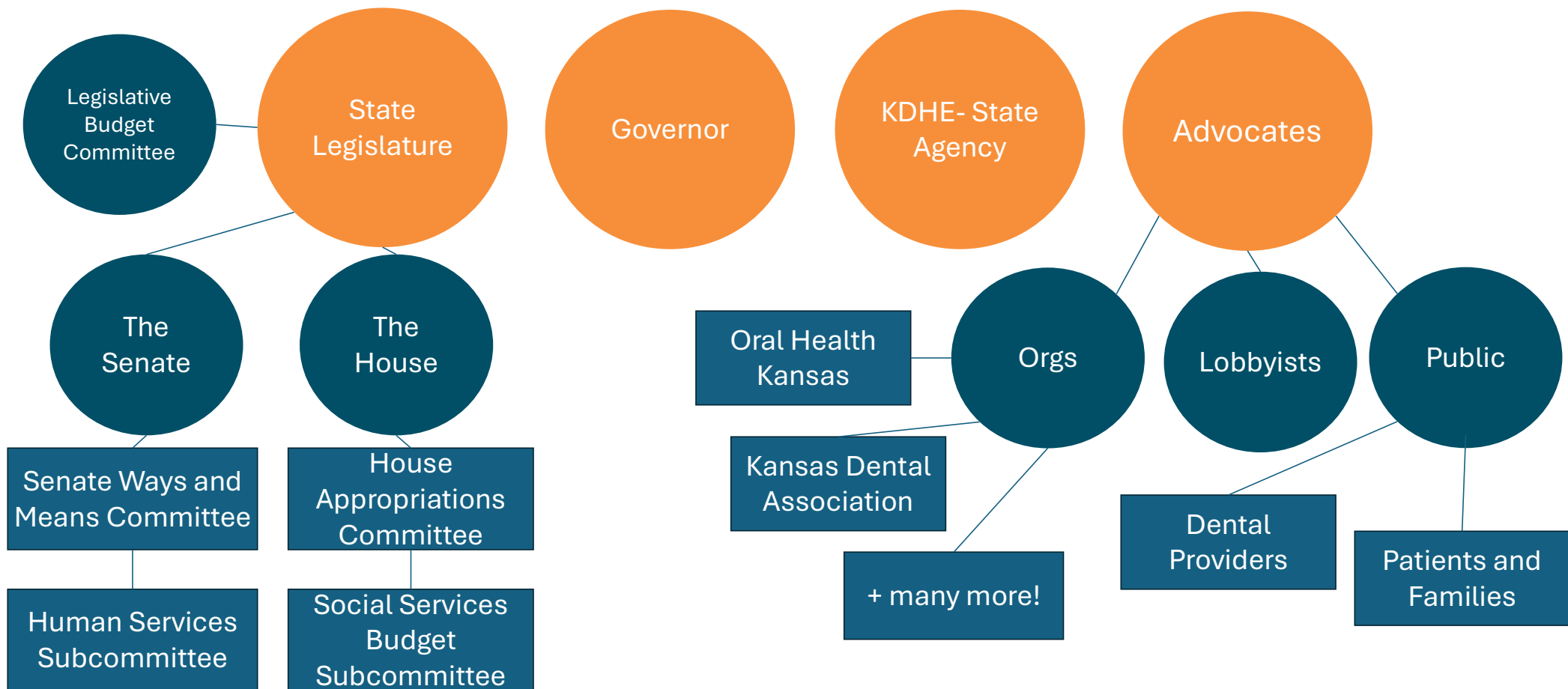
What do you think is the biggest reason Medicaid changes take so long?

- a. Lack of funding
  - b. Legislative process
  - c. State Medicaid program implementation
  - d. I honestly don't know
- 

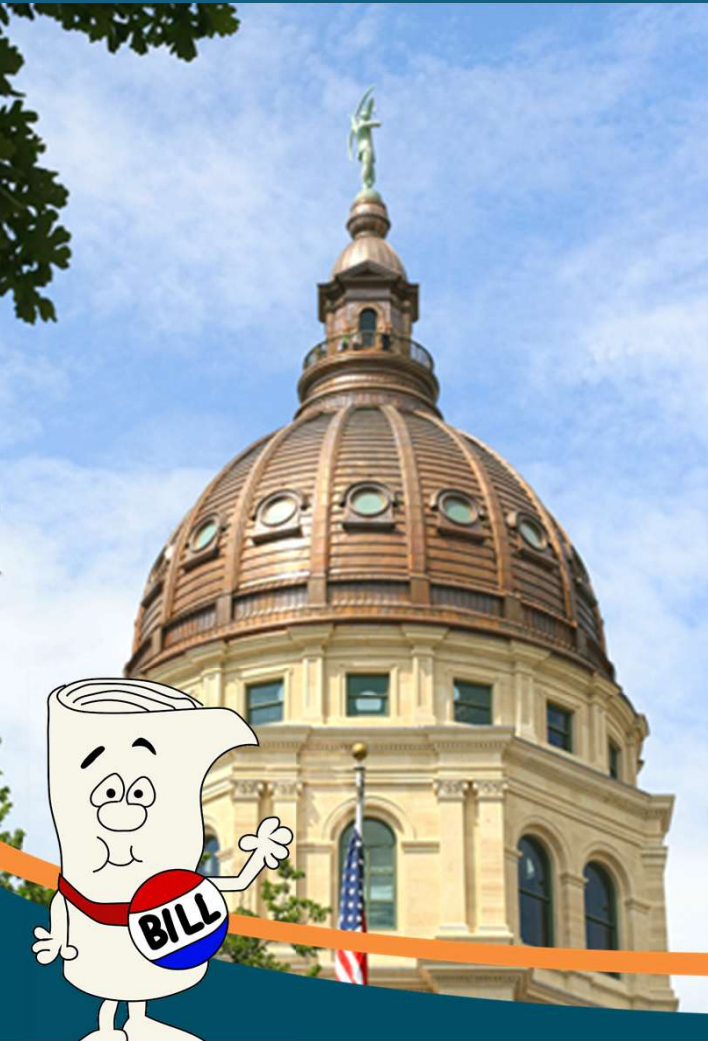
# Social Studies 101



# Key Players



# Social Studies 101



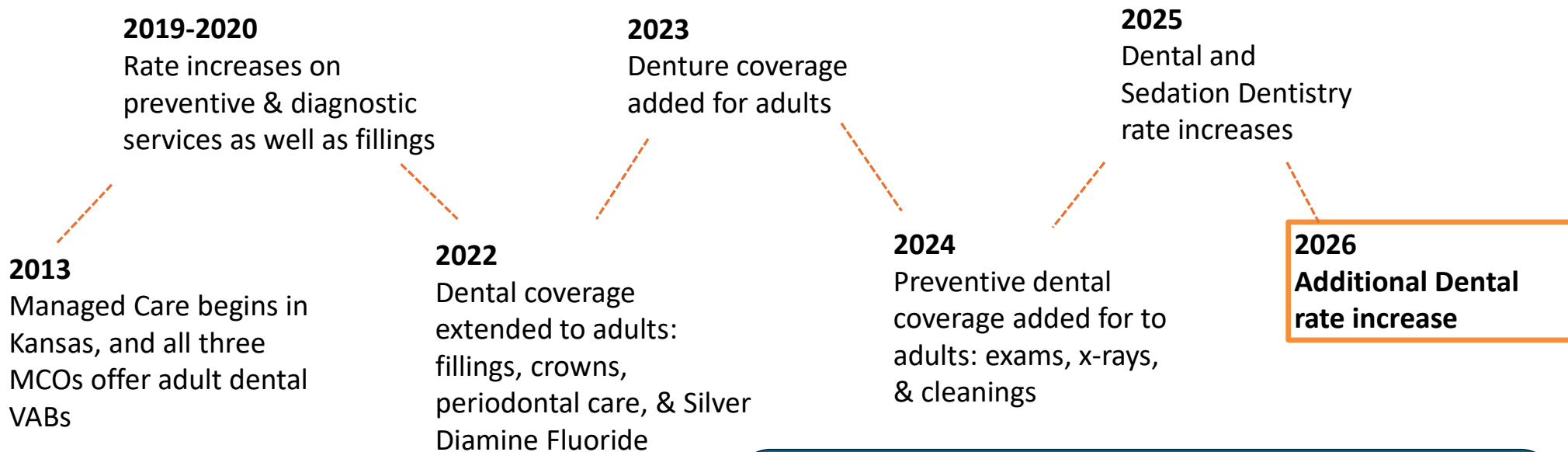
## **What is the State Budget?**

- Also known as “Appropriations bill” or “Mega bill”
- This budget directs public spending for the upcoming year, including healthcare
- It must be balanced e.g., expenditures cannot exceed revenues and reserves

## **Where do the dollars for the Medicaid Dental Program come from?**

- State General Funds and Federal Funds
- Revenue sources for SGF are individual and corporate state taxes, sales tax, other taxes
- Traditional federal matching system- the federal government pays a percentage of Medicaid program costs, based on state poverty level

# Improvements in Kansas Medicaid dental coverage



" The legislative process is complex. Multiple steps are intertwined into an idea, composing a bill, researching the topic, and taking it to a committee. Legislative [process] takes time, building collaboration, and coordination."- Rep. Reavis

# Medicaid Dental Rate Increase 2026

## Identify and understand the issue and lay the groundwork:

Rates continue to be a barrier to providers joining or staying in the Medicaid network. People need to know.

**House and State budget committees make tough decisions:**  
\$15 million (all funds) included in House Appropriations and \$0 in Senate Ways and Means

**Time to settle your differences:**  
\$15 million vs \$0 million vs something in between- what's it going to be?

**Signed, Sealed, Delivered:** \$5 million (all funds) signed into budget for Medicaid dental rates

**Starting point:** \$12 million signed into the state budget for Medicaid dental rates. This fell short of the \$40 million needed to increase all dental rates.

**Bring the what and the why:** The 'good idea' and justification presented to relevant legislative sub-committees- \$30 million dollars for Medicaid dental rates

**House and State Chambers make even tougher decisions:**  
\$15 million included in House Budget bill  
\$0 in Senate Budget bill

ML1

**Final Bill from the Legislature**  
The budget bill is passed to the Governor, who can line-item veto sections

**Put it into practice:**  
The Medicaid agency implements the changes

SPRING 2025



FALL 2026

**ML1** Competing against education, infrastructure , reduced taxes, in a year of deficit- we got more. In a year where cutting was the aim, they elected to support you and your patients (although not at the amount we want).

MaryAnne Lynch Small, 2026-08-07T18:41:07.165

**Identify and understand the issue and lay the groundwork:** Rates continued to be a barrier to dental providers joining or staying in the Medicaid network. People need to know.

### Organizations

- Data collection and information gathering
- Build relationships with key legislators
- Educate legislators on the issue
- Engage key partners

### Dental Providers and Consumers

- **Share your story and experiences:**
  - **Dental Medicaid Facilitator Team**
- **Engage your peers**
- **Join an advisory group:**
  - **Dental Provider Advisory Group**
- **Find your House and Senate representatives:**
  - **Are they on any of the relevant committees?**
  - **[Find them here](#)**

### Lobbyists

- Understand state legislative priorities
- Learn about individual legislators
- Track relevant special committees and sessions

**Bring the what and the why:** The 'good idea' and justification presented to relevant legislative sub- committees

Organizations

- Collaboration and coordination of advocacy efforts
  - Key partners
  - Community members
- Garner support for the ask
- Develop messaging
- Meet with legislative committee members
- Provide written and verbal testimony

Dental Providers and Consumers

- **Keep up to date with progress**
  - **Subscribe to the Weekly Wednesday Update**
  - **Join the advocacy coalition**
- **Collaborate with organizations**
  - **How can I get my point across effectively?**
  - **What parts of my story are going to make the most impact?**
- **Contact your representatives**
- **Provide written testimony**
- **Provide verbal testimony**
- **Engage your peers**

Lobbyists

- Track relevant committees and sessions
- Coordinate advocacy efforts
- Assist with messaging based on legislative priorities

“The most effective testimony is...**delivered by a broad range of constituents**- not solely by lobbyists. **Grassroots are impactful** for the advocacy of proposed legislation.” - Rep. Reavis

**Signed, Sealed, Delivered:** \$5 million signed into budget for Medicaid dental rates

**Put it into practice:** The Medicaid agency implements the changes

### Organizations

- Communicate the news to the relevant parties- MCOs, providers, consumers and more
- Collect feedback from relevant parties
  - Dental rate prioritization survey
- Begin work with the state agency to assist implementation
- Review data collection metrics

### Dental Providers and Consumers

- **Educate your peers and patients**
- **Share implementation priorities**
- **Thank your representatives**
- **Provider implementation updates to organizations and KDHE**

### Lobbyists

- Understand state legislative priorities
- Learn about individual legislators
- Track relevant special committees and sessions

## Poll Question

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What Medicaid challenge has affected your practice the most?

- a. Low reimbursement
  - b. Enrollment process
  - c. Claims/billing issues
  - d. Finding reliable information
  - e. Staffing or time it takes to manage
- 

# Oral Health Kansas Wants to Help

- Dental Medicaid Facilitator Program
- Provider Guidance documents
- Medicaid Webinars
- Educational programing

QUESTIONS? PROBLEMS?

## We are your KanCare Concierge for Dental Offices

Our Dental Medicaid Facilitator team is here to help dentists become Kansas Medicaid providers. With 120 years of shared experience, we are available to offer real, hands-on support – no chatbots, just real people ready to assist you. Whether you're new to Medicaid or expanding your practice, our team is here to help make the process as smooth as possible.

CONTACT OUR DENTAL MEDICAID FACILITATOR TEAM:

✉ [info@oralhealthkansas.org](mailto:info@oralhealthkansas.org)

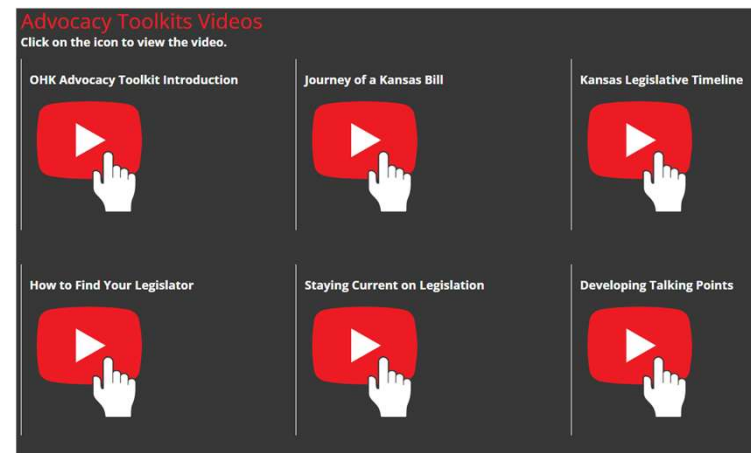
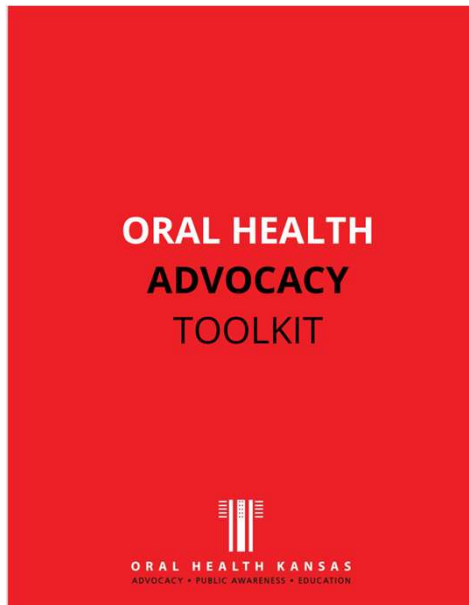


"I have been involved with legislative for a large portion of my career. The advice I would give to a new dentist is set your expectations of legislator at a realistic level, nothing happens quickly."  
–Dr. Allen Reavis

[www.pathwaystooralhealth.org](http://www.pathwaystooralhealth.org)

# Advocacy Toolkit

[www.oralhealthkansas.org/AdvocacyToolkit](http://www.oralhealthkansas.org/AdvocacyToolkit)



# How you can get involved

- Sign up for the **Weekly Wednesday Update**
- Join the Advocacy Coalition
- Invite your colleagues to join advocacy efforts
- Join the Oral Health Kansas **Provider Advisory Group**
- Share your story and experience in written and verbal testimony
- Contact your representatives
- Report your Medicaid challenges to KDHE

A dark teal speech bubble graphic with a pointed bottom, containing the word "Questions?" in white text.

**Questions?**

## Poll Question

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What is the top Medicaid issue you have wanted to fix?



## Slide 31

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**AR1** This is a similar question to the one above.

Abby Richwine, 2026-08-07T16:57:38.061

# Resources for Dental Providers



## NEW ERA, NEW OPPORTUNITIES: MAKING MEDICAID WORK FOR YOU

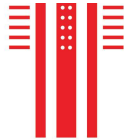
|                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| NEW RATES, BETTER COVERAGE | + |
| YOUR PRACTICE YOUR WAY     | + |
| GET TO KNOW YOUR MCOS      | + |
| ENROLLMENT & CREDENTIALING | + |
| FILING MEDICAID CLAIMS     | + |
| DO WELL BY DOING GOOD      | + |
| MY DENTAL CARE PASSPORT    | + |
| VALUE ADDED BENEFITS       | + |

## Provider Guidance

-  Glossary
-  Kansas Medicaid Adult Dental Fee Schedule
-  Kansas Medicaid Dental Coverage
-  Enrolling & Credentialing
-  Filing Claims
-  Your Practice, Your Way

<https://pathwaystooralhealth.org/dental-providers/>

# Resources for Dental Providers



**ORAL HEALTH KANSAS**

ADVOCACY • PUBLIC AWARENESS • EDUCATION

## Medicaid (KanCare) Adult Dental Benefits Frequently Asked Questions for Providers



### Who is eligible for the new adult dental benefit?

All people over age 21 who are eligible for Medicaid have access to new dental benefits. Adults who are eligible for Medicaid include people with disabilities, older adults, and pregnant people.

### When did the adult dental benefits go into effect?

- Coverage for fillings, crowns, and gum disease care for people over age 21 went into effect on July 1, 2022.
- Coverage for dentures went into effect on July 1, 2023.
- Coverage for dental exams, x-rays, and cleanings for all adults without an annual limit on July 1, 2024.

### What services are covered for people 18-20?

The services covered under Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT) are in effect for people up to age 21, and then the adult benefits kick in.

### Does the new Kansas adult Medicaid dental coverage extend to pregnant persons? Are they able to get the same benefits: dentures, restorative, and cleanings under this new plan? Or are there tiers where some are eligible while others are not?

The new adult dental benefits are available to pregnant people who are over age 21. All of the services are available to all people over age 21 who have Medicaid coverage.



## For Providers

- Frequently Asked Questions, including who is eligible and how a practice can understand the needs of Medicaid consumers.
- Enroll to become a Medicaid provider.
- List of codes covered in the new benefit and the rates for each.
- **Dr. Aaron Bumann**, Kansas City, Missouri, pediatric dentist shares myths and facts about being a Medicaid dental provider in this video.

<https://oralhealthkansas.org/MedicaidAdultDentalBenefits.html>

# Dental Provider Advisory Group

**DENTAL PROVIDER  
ADVISORY GROUP**

Share your experiences and explore existing barriers and possible strategies as we work to improve the dental landscape for providers and all Kansans.



**Who:** Dentists & Dental Hygienists  
**Where:** Virtual  
**When:** Quarterly Meetings  
**Time:** Approx. 8 hours/year  
A stipend will be provided

Scan the QR code  
or [click here](#) to learn more



For further information please contact  
[info@oralhealthkansas.org](mailto:info@oralhealthkansas.org)

Scan the QR code



or click here to  
sign up for our

**Weekly**  
**Wednesday**  
**Update.**

**We are here to help!**

Dental Medicaid Facilitator Team  
[info@oralhealthkansas.org](mailto:info@oralhealthkansas.org)



# New Era, New Opportunities Webinar Series



**October 13**