



DHSS OFFICE OF DENTAL HEALTH

# NEWSLETTER

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MONTHLY MISSOURI ORAL HEALTH UPDATE

Welcome to our latest newsletter edition, where we bring you a blend of timely updates and essential insights into the realm of oral health. This month, we are focusing on vaccinations which will give valuable insights as next month will be a month of vaccination. There's much to explore and learn in this edition.

## Prioritizing HPV Vaccinations: Safeguarding Against HPV-Related Cancers

In the last years, the importance of HPV vaccinations has gained more attention than it has before. For this reason, next month will be dedicated to this vaccination. Human papillomavirus (HPV) is a common virus that can lead to various cancers, including cervical, anal and oropharyngeal cancers. Vaccination against HPV is crucial in preventing these cancers and reducing their associated morbidity and mortality rates. The HPV vaccination is recommended for both males and females between the ages of 9 and 12. Vaccination at this age provides optimal protection before potential exposure to the virus. However, individuals aged up to 26 who have not received the vaccine are also advised to get vaccinated. We strongly encourage everyone to make [HPV](#) vaccination a priority within their comprehensive health and wellness plan. A healthy community starts from the people who are not indifferent to their health. Also, we are delighted to mention that The ICAP team from Nebraska is dedicated to assisting various health care providers with their infection control requirements. They offer resources tailored to the needs of dental facilities, specifically focusing on infection control and prevention. For more information, click [here](#).



## Join National Oral Health Conference in April in St. Louis, MO

The National Oral Health Conference is back, and this time, it is heading to the vibrant city of St. Louis, MO, from April 15 to 17, 2024. The event is going to an enriching experience where different experts will gather to share innovative techniques and groundbreaking insights in oral health care. The conference will offer a range opportunities for dentists, hygienists, researchers, educators and allied dental professionals. Furthermore, it will be an invaluable experience to expand networking and professional growth. This time event will include diverse topics such as emerging trends in dental care, oral health policies and advocacy efforts, integrating digital dentistry into practice, innovation in dental research and treatment modalities and many more. For more details and registration, click [here](#).

## Office of Dental Health to Receive Award at MCOH Conference

The selection of Oral Health Champion Awardees is conducted by the Missouri Coalition for Oral Health Board, based on recommendations from the Conference Committee. Nominees are chosen for their notable contributions to state-level oral health policy and efforts to improve oral health in Missouri, as well as their advocacy for prioritizing oral health among policymakers and the public. The Office of Dental Health (ODH) operates within the Department of Health and Senior Services. Committed to enhancing oral health across Missouri, ODH administers various public health programs focused on education and promotion. These initiatives include oral health education for all age groups, advocacy for community water fluoridation, community-based preventive dental programs for children, promotion of dental sealants and addressing dental workforce shortages. ODH collaborates with community partners to serve the diverse needs of Missourians. For more information about ODH and its programs, click [here](#).



*Dr. Drue Barton, Associate State Dental Director*

## Welcome Dr. Drue Barton: New Associate State Dental Director Joins Our Team

We are introducing Dr. Drue Barton, the newly appointed Associate State Dental Director for the Office of Dental Health. Dr. Barton holds a Doctor of Dental Medicine degree and a certificate in public health from the Missouri School of Dentistry and Oral Health, graduating in 2017. Additionally, he earned a Master's in Business Administration from Pittsburg State University in 2022. With a fervent dedication to enhancing dental care accessibility for underserved communities, Dr. Barton has contributed significantly through dental mission trips and outreach initiatives in rural schools and special needs facilities across southeast Kansas. Prior to his tenure with the [Office of Dental Health](#), he played a pivotal role at the Missouri Dental Association, notably in developing curriculum for the prospective Oral Preventative Assistant-EFDA workforce position. Committed to advancing oral health through inventive approaches, he aims to foster cohesion and effectiveness within the health care system by leveraging diverse professional backgrounds and expertise. We extend a warm welcome to Dr. Barton as we look forward to his contributions in advancing oral health initiatives across Missouri.