PUBLIC HEALTH FUNDING  Strong investments in public health allow a state to carry out programs that improve health. Alabama receives $115 per person from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Health Resources and Services Administration in public health funding. The Prevention and Public Health Fund awarded the state $8.58 million in grants for community and clinical prevention efforts and improvements to public health infrastructure in fiscal year 2018.

ACCESS TO CARE  9.7% of people in Alabama do not have health insurance coverage, compared to the national uninsured rate of 8.8%. The number of practicing primary care physicians is also an important measure of health care availability. Alabama has 122.8 active primary care physicians per 100,000 people. This is significantly lower than the national rate of 159.6 active primary care physicians per 100,000 people.

Notable Health Measures

- Diabetes 14.5% of adults have diabetes, ranking the state 2nd highest in the nation.
- Infant mortality Alabama had 8.2 infant deaths per 1,000 live births in 2019, ranking the state 2nd highest in the nation.
- High school graduation 89.3% of students graduate from high school in Alabama, ranking the state 7th highest in the nation. People with higher levels of education are more likely to adopt healthy behaviors.

The Challenges Ahead

- Tobacco use 19.2% of the adult population regularly smokes cigarettes, ranking Alabama 40th highest in the nation. Smoking-related illnesses have been attributed to 8,600 deaths each year in Alabama and an estimated $1.9 billion annually in smoking-related expenditures, such as home health care and medical equipment.

- Obesity Obesity contributes to poor general health and is a leading factor in preventable diseases. The obesity rate has steadily increased over the past two and a half decades, and is estimated to be about 36.2% of the population. Compared to other areas in the United States, the South has the highest prevalence of obesity at 33.6%. Alabama also reports low rates of physical activity, with about 30.7% of adults reporting that they do not exercise. This is about 7% higher than the national percentage of adults who do not report exercising at 23.8%.

Sources: Trust for America’s Health Prevention and Public Health Fund State Fact Sheets, 2019; America’s Health Rankings analysis of Trust for America’s Health; U.S. HHS; U.S. Census Bureau, Annual Estimates of the Resident Population: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2018; United Health Foundation, America’s Health Rankings; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Tobacco Control Program Funding.