PUBLIC HEALTH FUNDING  Strong investments in public health allow a state to carry out programs that improve health. California receives $114 per person in funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA). In fiscal year 2018, California received more than $48 million in Prevention and Public Health Fund funding – the highest in the country. These grants help fund community and clinical prevention efforts and improvements to public health infrastructure.

ACCESS TO CARE  7.2% of people in California 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. California has 141.4 active primary care physicians per 100,000 people in comparison to 159.6 practicing primary care physicians per 100,000 people nationally.

Notable Health Measures

• Tobacco use 11.2% of the adult population smokes cigarettes, ranking California 2nd lowest in the nation. However, 17.3% of California youth reported using e-cigarettes, which is of concern as non-smoking adults are four times more likely to start smoking cigarettes after only 18 months of e-cigarette use. Each year, 40,000 people die from smoking-related illnesses in California and $13.3 billion is spent on health care costs due to smoking.

• Obesity while California ranks 5th lowest in terms of obesity rate, the rate has continued to steadily increase with 25.8 percent of the adult population now obese in the state.

• Infant mortality 4.2 deaths per 1,000 live births, ranking 5th lowest in the nation.

The Challenges Ahead

AIR POLLUTION  California is ranked the worst state in the nation in terms of air pollution with an estimated 12.8 micrograms of fine particles per cubic meter. Poor air quality can have severe health effects and impact a large number of people, particularly impacting young children and older adults.

PERTUSSIS  In the last year, the incidence of pertussis increased from 3.8 to 6.5 cases per 1,000 people. California is ranked highly compared to other states at 20th in the nation. Also known as whooping cough, pertussis is highly contagious, but can be prevented through immunization. However, in the past three years, vaccinations among California children aged 19 to 35 months decreased from 70.4 percent in 2008 to 68.6 percent, leaving people more susceptible to outbreaks.

Sources: Trust for America’s Health, Investing in America’s Health; Trust for America’s Health, Prevention and Public Health Fund at Work in States; U.S. Census Bureau, 2015, 2016, and 2017 1-Year American Community Surveys; US National Library of Medicine, United Health Foundation, America's Health Rankings; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Tobacco Control Program Funding.