PUBLIC HEALTH FUNDING  Strong investments in public health allow a state to carry out programs that improve health. Louisiana receives $89 total per person from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA) for public health funding. In 2018 fiscal year, the Prevention and Public Health Fund awarded the state about $10.9 million in grants for community and clinical prevention efforts and improvements to public health infrastructure.

ACCESS TO CARE  8.2 percent of people in Louisiana do not have health insurance coverage, below the national uninsured rate of 8.8 percent. The number of practicing primary care physicians is also an important measure of health care availability. Louisiana has 139.7 active primary care physicians per 100,000 people, which is below the national average of 156.7 practicing primary care physicians per 100,000 people.

Notable Health Measures

- **High school graduation**  78.1 percent of students graduate from high school in Louisiana, ranking the state 4th lowest in the nation. This is of public health concern as there is a strong connection between education and health. People with higher levels of education are more likely to adopt healthy behaviors.

- **Diabetes**  Louisiana’s diabetes rates have fluctuated in recent years. In 2015, the percentage of adults with diabetes was 11.3 percent, but then climbed to 12.7 percent the following year. The percentage then dropped to 12.1 percent in 2017, only to rise during next two years to 14.1 percent in 2019. Louisiana has high obesity (36.8 percent) and inactivity (30.8 percent) rates, which are often contributing factors to diabetes.

The Challenges Ahead

- **Tobacco use**  20.5 percent of adults in Louisiana smoke cigarettes, ranking the state 8th highest in the nation. Each year, 7,210 people die from smoking-related illnesses in Louisiana and $1.9 billion is spent on health care costs due to smoking.

- **Obesity**  36.8 percent of adults in Louisiana are obese. The state has the 4th highest obesity rate in the nation. Obesity contributes to poor general health and is a leading factor in preventable diseases. Each year, an estimated $190.2 billion is spent on obesity-related health issues in the U.S., accounting for 21 percent of annual medical spending.

- **Low birthweight and infant mortality**  10.7 percent of live births are low birthweight in Louisiana, ranking the state 2nd highest in the nation. Low birthweight is associated with short- and long-term complications and an increased risk of infant mortality. The state is ranked 5th highest in the nation for infant mortality with 7.5 deaths per 1,000 live births.

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; United Health Foundation, America’s Health Rankings; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Tobacco Control Program Funding.