PUBLIC HEALTH FUNDING  Strong investments in public health allow a state to carry out programs that improve health. Mississippi receives $85 per person total from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA) in public health funding. In 2018, the Prevention and Public Health Fund awarded Mississippi over $5.8 million in grants for community and clinical prevention efforts and improvements to public health infrastructure.

ACCESS TO CARE  12.1 percent of people in Mississippi do not have health insurance coverage, well above the national uninsured rate of 8.8 percent. The number of practicing health care providers is also an important measure of health care availability. Mississippi has 110.8 active primary care physicians per 100,000 people, ranking 4th lowest in the nation. Additionally, Mississippi has 43.1 dentists per 100,000 people, ranking 3rd lowest in the nation.

Notable Health Measures

• Physical inactivity  32.0 percent of adults in Mississippi report doing no physical activity in the past 30 days, ranking the state 2nd highest in the nation for physical inactivity.

• Obesity  Mississippi has the highest obesity rate in the nation with 39.5 percent of adults obese. Obesity contributes to poor general health and is a leading factor in preventable diseases.

• High school graduation  83.0 percent students in Mississippi graduate from high school, ranking 18th 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.

The Challenges Ahead

• Tobacco use  20.5 percent of adults smoke cigarettes in Mississippi, ranking the state 7th highest in the nation. Each year, 5,400 people die from smoking-related illnesses in Mississippi and $1.2 billion is spent on health care costs due to smoking.

• Cancer deaths  The state has the 2nd highest cancer death rate in the nation with 226.8 deaths per 100,000 people.

• Low birthweight and infant mortality  11.6 percent of live births in Mississippi are low birthweight, the highest rate in the nation. Low birthweight is associated with short- and long-term complications and an increased risk of infant mortality. The state also has the highest rate of infant mortality in the nation with 8.6 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.