PUBLIC HEALTH FUNDING  Strong investments in public health allow a state to carry out programs that improve health. South Carolina receives $80 total per person from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA) in public health funding. The Prevention and Public Health Fund awarded the state $8.69 million in grants for community and clinical prevention efforts and improvements to public health infrastructure in fiscal year 2018.

ACCESS TO CARE  10.8 percent of people in South Carolina do not have health insurance coverage, which is above the national uninsured rate of 8.8 percent. The number of practicing primary care physicians is also an important measure of health care availability. South Carolina has 131.3 active primary care physicians per 100,000 people. Nationally, there are 159.6 practicing primary care physicians per 100,000 people.

Notable Health Measures

- Excessive drinking  The state has an excessive drinking rate slightly lower than the national average (18.2 percent) with 16.7 percent of adults reporting drinking excessively. Excessive alcohol use can lead to fetal damage, liver diseases, high blood pressure, cardiovascular diseases and other health problems.

- Preventable hospitalizations  The state has a relatively low rate of preventable hospitalization with 45.6 discharges for ambulatory care-sensitive conditions per 1,000 Medicare enrollees.

The Challenges Ahead

- High school graduation  83.6 of students graduate from high school in South Carolina, ranking the state 32nd in the nation. There is a strong connection between education and health. People with higher levels of education are more likely to adopt healthy behaviors.

- Infectious diseases  South Carolina has the 2nd highest rate of infectious diseases in the nation, based on the incidence of chlamydia, pertussis and Salmonella.

- Low birthweight and infant mortality  9.7 percent of live births in South Carolina are low birthweight. This is the 5th highest rate of low birthweight babies in the nation. Low birthweight is associated with short- and long-term complications and an increased risk of infant mortality. In the past four years, infant mortality decreased 7.0 percent from 7.2 to 6.7 deaths per 1,000 live births but is still above the national rate of 6.0 infant deaths per 100,000 live births.

- Tobacco use  18.0 percent of adults in South Carolina regularly smoke cigarettes, which is above the national rate of 16.1 percent. Each year, 7,200 people die from smoking-related illnesses in South Carolina and $1.9 billion is spent on health care costs due to smoking.

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