Public Health Funding

Strong investments in public health allow a state to carry out programs that improve health. Utah 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 $7.32 million in grants for community and clinical prevention efforts and improvements to public health infrastructure in fiscal year 2018.

Access to Care

9.3 percent of people in Utah do not have health insurance coverage compared to the national uninsured rate of 8.8 percent. The number of practicing primary care physicians is also an important measure of health care availability. Utah has 102.0 active primary care physicians per 100,000 people, the 2nd lowest in the nation and well below the national average of 159.6 practicing primary care physicians per 100,000 people.

Notable Health Measures

- Tobacco use 9.7 percent of adults smoke cigarettes in Utah. This is the lowest adult smoking rate in the nation. Still, every year, 1,300 adults in Utah die from smoking-related illnesses and $542 million is spent on health care costs due to smoking.

- Cancer deaths The state also has the lowest cancer death rate in the nation with 149.8 deaths per 100,000 people.

- Obesity While the state has the 10th lowest adult obesity rate in the nation, the rate has more than doubled since 1990 with 27.7 percent of adults now obese. Obesity contributes to poor general health and is a leading factor in preventable diseases.

The Challenges Ahead

- Drug deaths Utah has the 16th highest drug death rate in the nation with 23.0 deaths per 100,000 people.

- Air pollution Utah is ranked 43rd in the nation in terms of air pollution with an estimated 8.4 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.

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.