PUBLIC HEALTH FUNDING  Strong investments in public health allow a state to carry out programs that improve health. Alaska receives $281 per person from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Health Resources Services Administration in public health funding. This is the highest funded state in the country, with the national rate at $8177 per person. In fiscal year 2018, the Prevention and Public Health Fund awarded the state over $4.2 million in grants for community and clinical prevention efforts and improvements to public health infrastructure.

ACCESS TO CARE 13.2% of people in Alaska 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. Alaska has 141.2 active primary care physicians per 100,000 people. Nationally, there are 159.6 practicing primary care physicians per 100,000 people.

Notable Health Measures

• High school graduation  Alaska’s graduation rate is 78.2%, which is significantly lower than the national graduation rate of 84.6%. This data is of concern given the connection between education and health. Individuals with higher levels of education are more likely to adopt healthy behaviors.

• Diabetes  8.8% of adults have diabetes, ranking the state 6th lowest in the nation.

• Chlamydia  802.1 cases per 100,000 people, ranking the state the highest in the nation.

• Health Emergency Preparedness  Alaska has the third lowest rate of flu vaccination at 44.1%. In a state-by-state study of health emergency preparedness by Trust for America’s Health, Alaska scored 8th lowest in the country.

The Challenges Ahead

• Tobacco use  19.1% of the adult population smokes cigarettes, higher than the national average of 16.1%. Additionally, 10.9% of the youth population reported smoking cigarettes in 2017, which is significantly higher than the national percentage at 8.8%. Each year 600 Alaskans died from smoking-related illnesses. Smoking-attributable costs, such as prescription drugs and medical care, consume about $438 million of Alaska’s annual budget.

• Violent crime  The number of violent offenses in the state has been steadily increasing in the past four years, and reported 885 violent crimes in 2019. Alaska currently has the highest violent crime rate in the country. Violent crimes may cause injuries, disability and early death. Additionally, violent crimes may cause long-term stress for families and communities, and interfere with leading a healthy lifestyle. However, violent crime can be prevented. Numerous programs and practices have shown that by addressing root causes it is possible to prevent violence.

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.