

THE FACTS

# DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

**Speak**  
for **Health**

AN INITIATIVE OF THE  
AMERICAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION

**PUBLIC HEALTH FUNDING** Strong investments in public health allow a state to carry out programs that improve health. The District of Columbia receives \$618 total per capita in funds dedicated to public health, both from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA). This is the highest per capita public health funding in the nation. The Prevention and Public Health Fund awarded the state \$14.56 million in grants for community and clinical prevention efforts and improvements to public health infrastructure in fiscal year 2020.

**ACCESS TO CARE** 3.5 percent of people in D.C. do not have health insurance coverage compared to the national uninsured rate of 9.2 percent. The number of practicing primary care providers is also an important measure of health care availability. D.C. has 489.3 active primary care providers per 100,000 people in comparison to the national rate of 241.9 practicing primary care providers per 100,000 people.

## Notable Health Measures

- **Tobacco use** D.C. ranks 7th lowest in the nation for smoking rates, with 12.7 percent of adults regularly smoking cigarettes. Yet, each year, about 800 people die from smoking-related illnesses in D.C. and \$391 million is spent on health care costs due to smoking.
- **Air pollution** D.C. ranks 49th in the nation in terms of air pollution with an estimated 9.5 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.

## The Challenges Ahead

- **Violent crime** There were 1,049 violent offenses per 100,000 people in D.C. in 2020, topping the highest ranked state of Alaska at 867 offenses per 100,000 people and well above the national rate of 379 offenses per 100,000 people. 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.
- **High school graduation** Only 68.5 percent of students in D.C. graduate high school compared to the national rate of 85.3 percent. This is a major 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 health benefits of educational attainment accumulate and as a result will also impact the community level and social/cultural context.

Sources: America's Health Rankings analysis of Trust for America's Health, U.S. HHS, U.S. Census Bureau, Annual Estimates of the Resident Population, United Health Foundation, AmericasHealthRankings.org, Accessed 2021; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. National Tobacco Control Program (NTCP) State Fact Sheets, (March 2021). Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/about/osh/state-fact-sheets/index.htm>; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Fiscal Year 2020 Grant Funding Profiles Totals, (July 2021). Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://fundingprofiles.cdc.gov>



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