PUBLIC HEALTH FUNDING  Strong investments in public health allow a state to carry out programs that improve health. South Carolina receives $84 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 $9.85 million in grants for community and clinical prevention efforts and improvements to public health infrastructure in fiscal year 2020.

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 9.2 percent. The number of practicing primary care providers is also an important measure of health care availability. South Carolina has 226.2 active primary care providers per 100,000 people. Nationally, there are 241.9 practicing primary care providers per 100,000 people.

Notable Health Measures

•  Excessive drinking  South Carolina ranks 12th highest for excessive drinking, with 20.1 percent of adults reporting drinking excessively in 2020. 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 4,141 discharges for ambulatory care-sensitive conditions per 100,000 Medicare enrollees.

The Challenges Ahead

•  High school graduation  81.0 percent of students graduate from high school in South Carolina, ranking the state 8th lowest 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.

•  Low birthweight  9.6 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.

•  Tobacco use  17.5 percent of adults in South Carolina regularly smoke cigarettes, which is above the national rate of 15.9 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.


The American Public Health Association champions the health of all people and all communities. We are the only organization that influences federal policy, has a nearly 150-year perspective and brings together members from all fields of public health. Learn more at www.apha.org.