

2026 Epidemiological Profile:

Executive Summary

Key Findings

Vaping & E-Cigarettes

- In 2024, 6.6% of DE adults reported that they currently used e-cigarettes (BRFSS, 2024).
- One in five 11th grade students (20%) report that they used an e-cigarette or vaping device at some point in their lifetime, and 7% report current or past month use (DSS, 2025).

Tobacco

- Yearly, over 480,000 deaths in the U.S. are linked to cigarette smoking and secondhand smoke exposure. These deaths are entirely preventable (CDC, 2024).
- Despite declining rates of tobacco use, according to the 2023-2024 NSDUH, nearly one in five Delawareans aged 12 and older (18.65%) report using a tobacco product during the past month.

Opioids

- According to the CDC State Unintentional Drug Overdose Reporting System (SUDORS), Delaware's 2024 drug overdose mortality rate involving any opioid was 29.9 deaths per 100,000 residents, ranking fifth among the 43 jurisdictions reporting.

Marijuana

- The 2025 DSS reports that approximately one in six 11th grade students (16%) have used marijuana in the past year.

Alcohol

- Rates of binge drinking are the highest among the 18–25 year-old age group, with nearly one-third (28.03%) of this group reporting the behavior within the past month (NSDUH, 2023-2024).
- According to the 2023-2024 NSDUH, less than half (44.43%) of all respondents perceive drinking five or more drinks once or twice a week as a great risk.

Health & Safety Consequences of Alcohol Use

- The CDC Alcohol-Related Disease Impact (ARDI) portal estimates 561 as Delaware's annual average for alcohol-related deaths for 2020-2021, with males representing about two-thirds of the deaths.

Other Illegal Drugs

- Findings from the 2023-2024 NSDUH estimates that 2.92% of Delawareans aged 12 and older used an illicit drug other than marijuana in the past month.

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Mental Health & Wellness

- According to the Division of Forensic Science (DFS), there were 132 deaths by suicide certified in DE in 2025.
- Among 11th graders, nearly one in six (15%) report feeling down, depressed, or hopeless on more than half of the days in the past two weeks (DSS, 2025).

Persons with Disabilities

- According to the 2024 BRFSS, 40.7% of DE adults with a disability report ever having depression compared to 14.2% among other adults.

ACEs & Other Trauma

- According to the 2023–2024 National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH), more than one in five Delaware youth (21.6%) have experienced one ACE and more than one in six (17.3%) have experienced two or more.
- The 2025 DSS indicates that nearly one in four 8th graders (24%) have been a victim, or known someone who has been a victim, of gun violence and 21% have witnessed violence at home.

Gambling

- According to the 2024 DSS, 11th grade students who reported gambling in the past year also reported higher rates of past month substance use (alcohol, marijuana, vaping) than those who did not report gambling.

Gender & Sexuality

- Only 9% of LGBTQ 11th grade students rate their emotional health as excellent compared to 20% of other students. About one in six LGBTQ 11th graders (16%) rate their emotional health as poor compared to 5% of their cisgender and heterosexual peers (DSS, 2025).
- The 2025 DSS indicates that 8th grade LGBTQ students reported over twice the rate of past year use of marijuana and vaping products.

Protective Factors

- In the 2025 DSS, 11th graders who reported frequently feeling safe in their schools and neighborhoods were less likely than other students to report substance use, anxiety, or depression.
- 16% of 8th graders who feel safe at school report recent feelings of anxiety compared to 41% of students who never or do not often feel safe in this setting (DSS, 2025).

Maternal & Child Behavioral Health

- During 2023, 9.1 per 1,000 newborn hospitalizations in DE involved neonatal abstinence syndrome (HCUP, 2023).
- DE scored a C- on the Maternal Mental Health Report Card in 2026. This grades states on screening and detection; providers and treatment; policy and payment; and parental support (Policy Center for Maternal Mental Health, 2026).