

Cancer in Fayette County

Whitney Zahnd, PhD

March 2, 2026

Who I am



Whitney Zahnd, PhD

- Assistant Professor, University of Iowa College of Public Health
- Past-president of the Iowa Rural Health Association
- Member of the Cancer Epidemiology and Population Sciences Program, Holden Comprehensive Cancer Center
- Research: rural-urban differences in cancer prevention, incidence and outcomes, access to care

These slides will be posted

These slides will be posted to the Iowa Cancer Registry website:

www.iowacancerregistry.org/99



If you have questions after, please email us at ICR-99countiesproject@uiowa.edu

Media

If you are a representative of the media and would like more information on this presentation or to speak with someone from the Iowa Cancer Registry, contact ICR-Media@uiowa.edu.

Survey

We would appreciate your feedback on this presentation.

We will send & post a link to a brief survey after this presentation.

99 Counties Project Team



Iowa Cancer
Consortium

www.canceriowa.org



IOWA
HEALTH CARE

Holden Comprehensive
Cancer Center

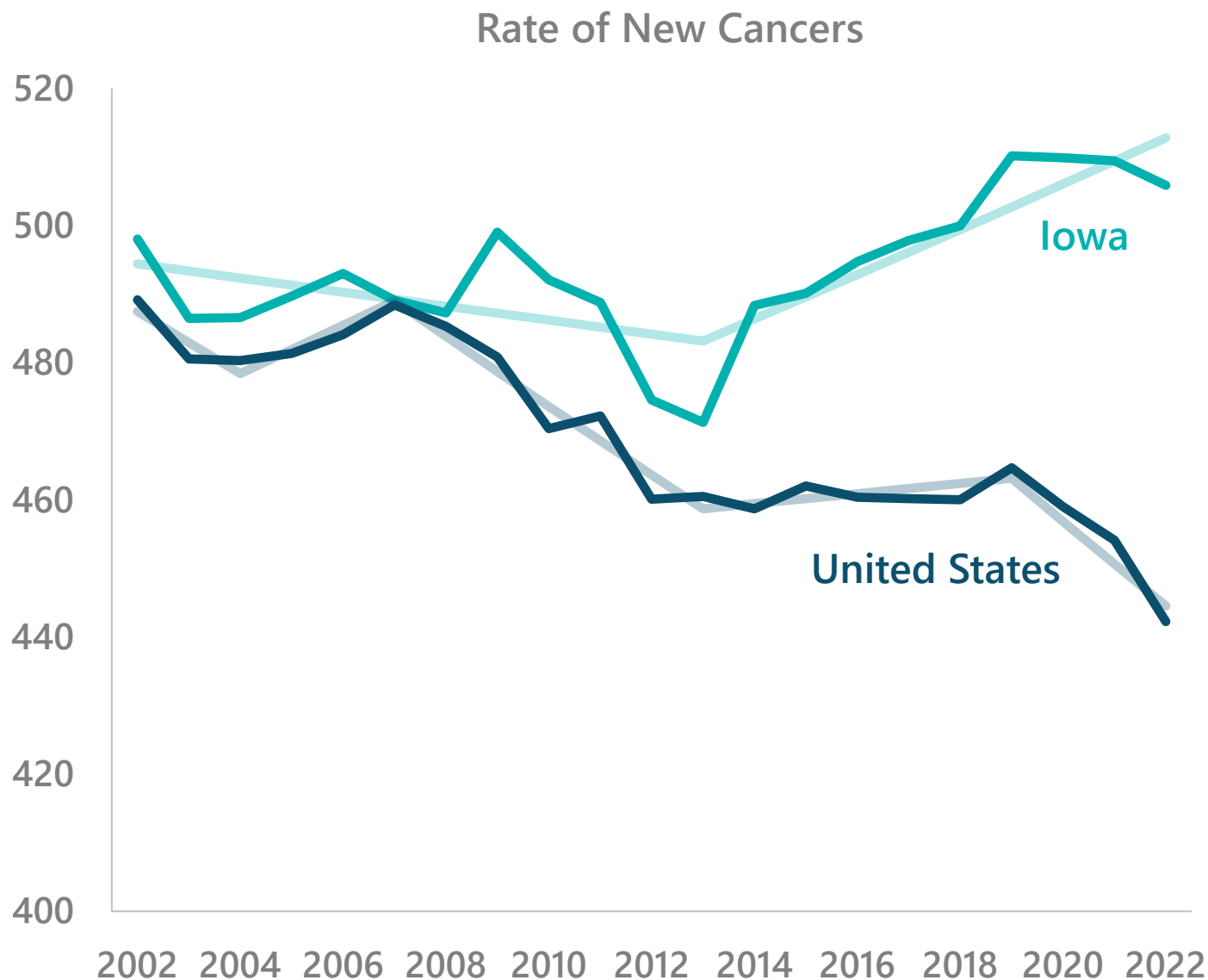
IOWA™ | Health and
Human Services

**“Statistics are people
with the tears wiped away”**

Dr. Irving Selikoff

Iowa has the **#2** highest rate of **new cancers** in the U.S.

Iowa's rate is **14% higher** than the U.S. rate

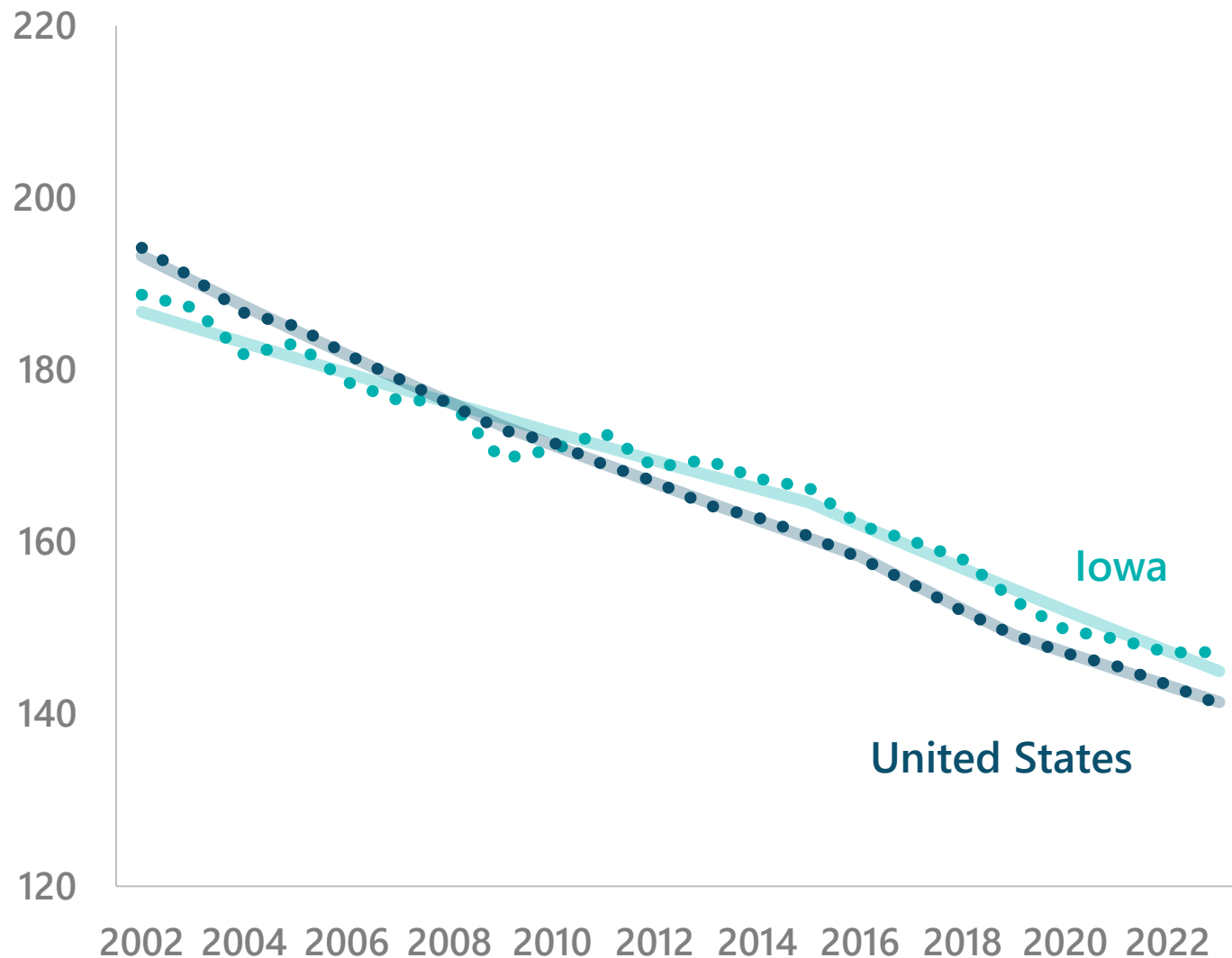


2020 data not included

Iowa has the **#23** highest rate of **cancer deaths** in the U.S.

Iowa's rate is **3% higher** than the U.S. rate

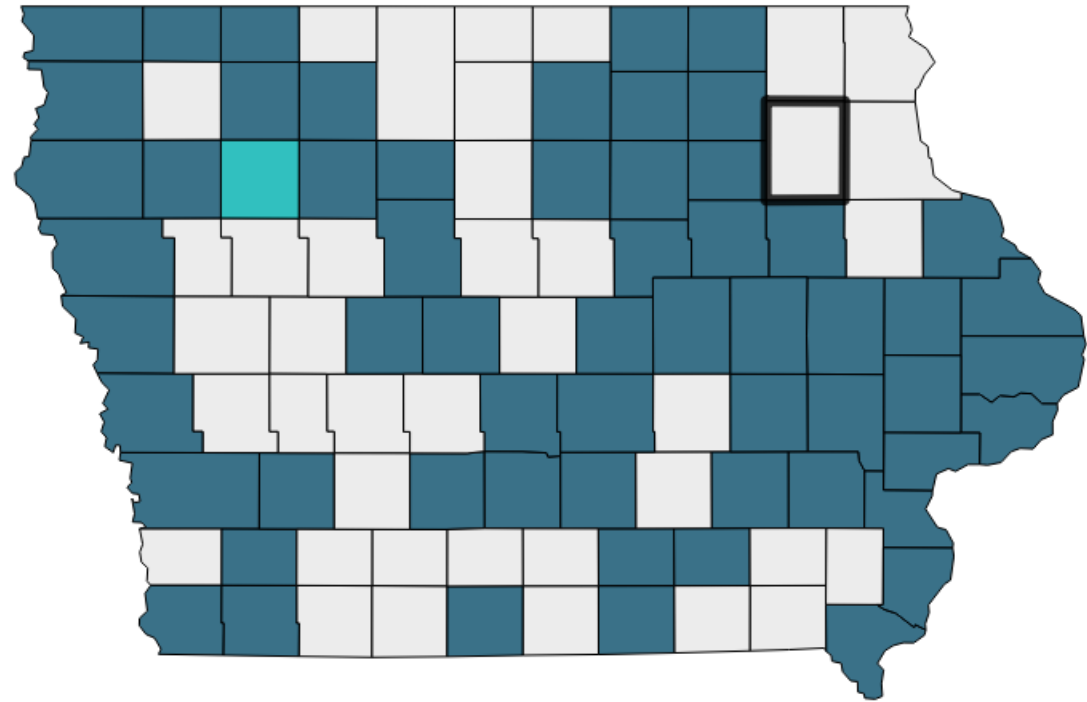
Rate of Cancer Deaths



Over half of Iowa's counties have a higher incidence rate than the U.S.

59 Counties with rate **OVER** the national average

1 County with rate **BELOW** the national average



- Above National Average
- Below National Average
- Similar to National Average

2018-2022 Incidence

About the Project

Goal: to enhance **community engagement** & **education** around cancer prevention and control across all of Iowa's 99 counties.



Present county-specific cancer data



Listen



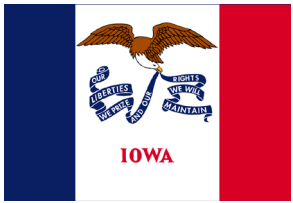
Provide Resources



Recommend actions

There are Many Cancer Control Partners in Iowa

State Government



Governor

- Implement state laws
- Advance and pursue policies and programs

Iowa Legislature

- Propose and vote on legislation
- Appropriate money to state agencies and programs
- Create and modify Iowa laws



Bureau of Chronic, Congenital and Inherited Conditions

Comprehensive Cancer Control Program

Cancer prevention, screening, survivorship

Care for Yourself
(Breast & Cervical Cancer Program)

Colorectal Cancer Screening Program

Bureau of Environmental Health Services

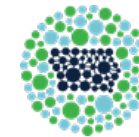
- Track environmental health-related diseases
- Assist local boards of health

Local (County) Public Health Services/Boards of Health

- Address health priorities and health disparities
- Promote healthy living
- Protect against environmental hazards
- Assure access to health services

Unity Point, MercyOne, Great River, Avera, Mayo, Methodist, Gundersen, Sanford and numerous independent **health systems, hospitals and clinics across Iowa**

Provide cancer prevention, screening, treatment, and survivorship services



Iowa Cancer Consortium

Advocate, collaborate, plan



Iowa Cancer Action Network

Advocate for better policies

ACS Iowa

Help with cancer treatment and recovery



Iowa's only NCI Designated Cancer Center

Health Care, research, education



Data, support research & education

UI Research Centers



Center for Health Effects of Environmental Contamination



Iowa Cancer Registry Goals



Assemble & report data on new cancers, cancer deaths, & survival



Respond to **data requests** from organizations & individuals



Support studies for cancer prevention, research & education

Federal Funding for Cancer Control in Iowa

- The Iowa Cancer Registry is funded in part with Federal funds from the **National Cancer Institute (National Institutes of Health)**, Department of Health and Human Services, under Contract No. HHSN261201800012I
- The Cancer in Iowa: 99 Counties Project is specifically funded by Federal funds from the **National Cancer Institute** through grant award: 5R01CA254628-04S2, and through National Cancer Institute funds provided to the University of Iowa Holden Comprehensive Cancer Center (P30CA086862)
- The Iowa Cancer Consortium acknowledges the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)** for its funding support under cooperative agreement NU58DP007103 awarded to the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (Iowa HHS).

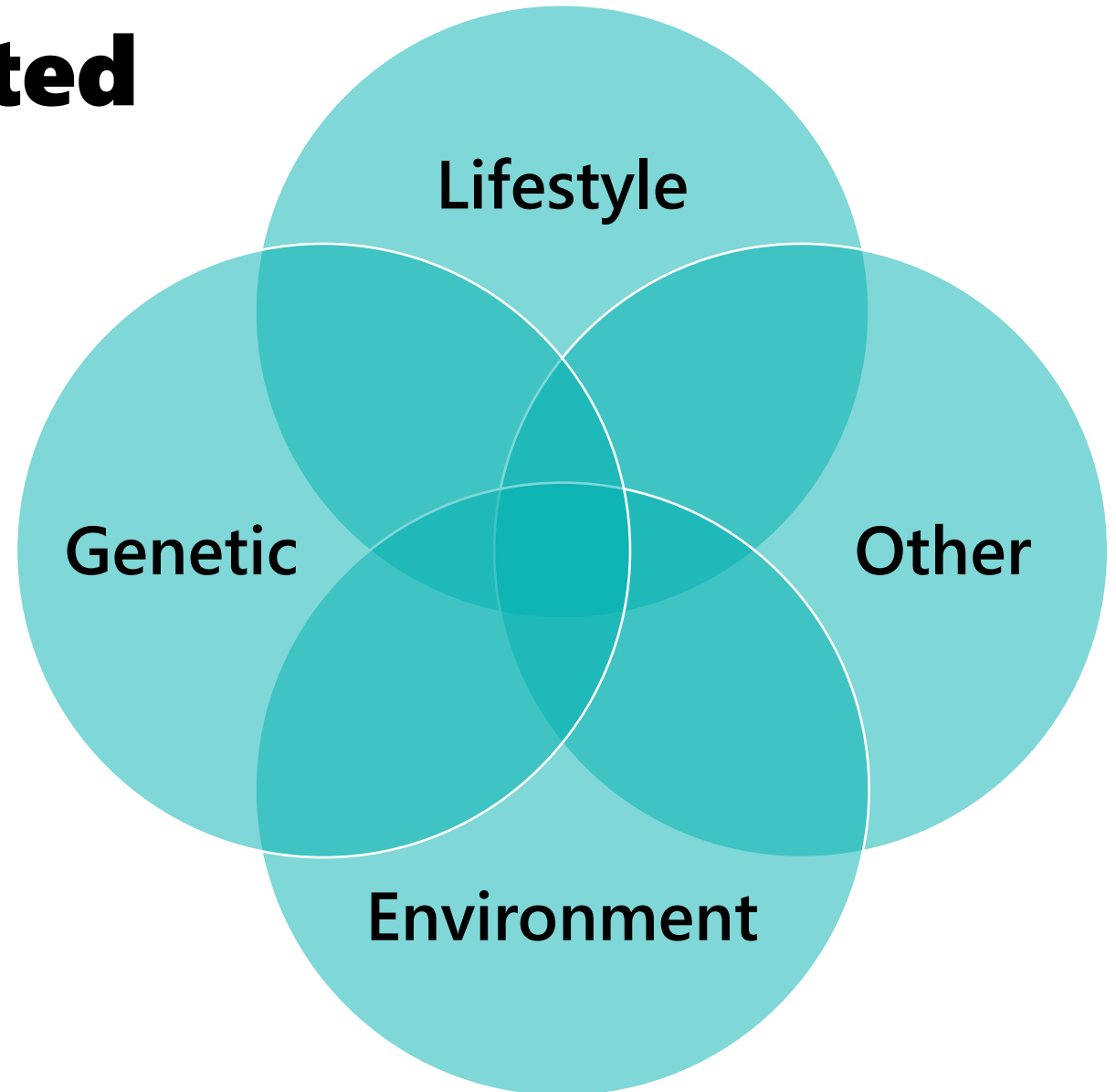
The contents of this presentation are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of CDC or the National Institutes of Health/National Cancer Institute.



Background on Cancer

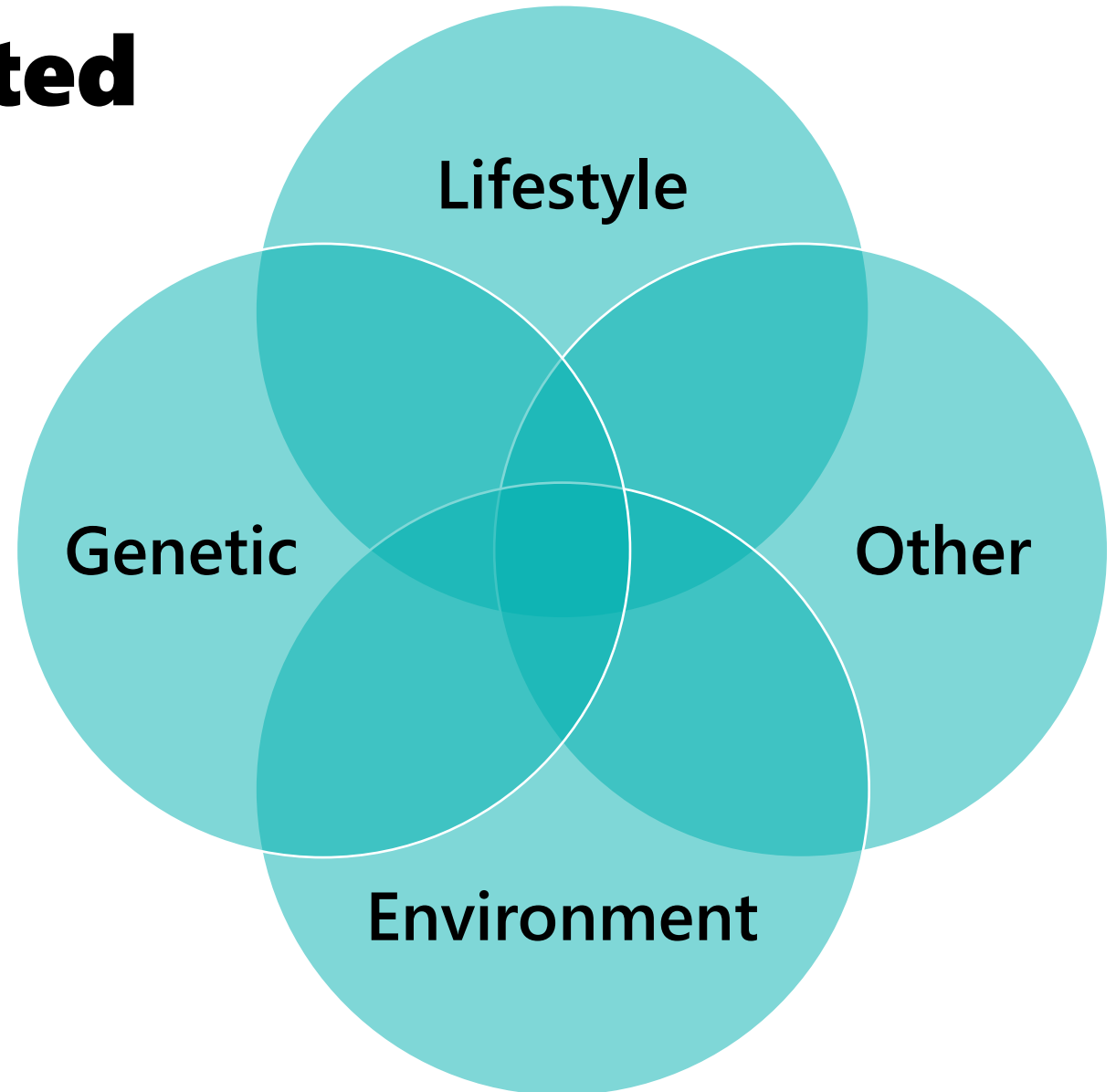
Cancer is Complicated

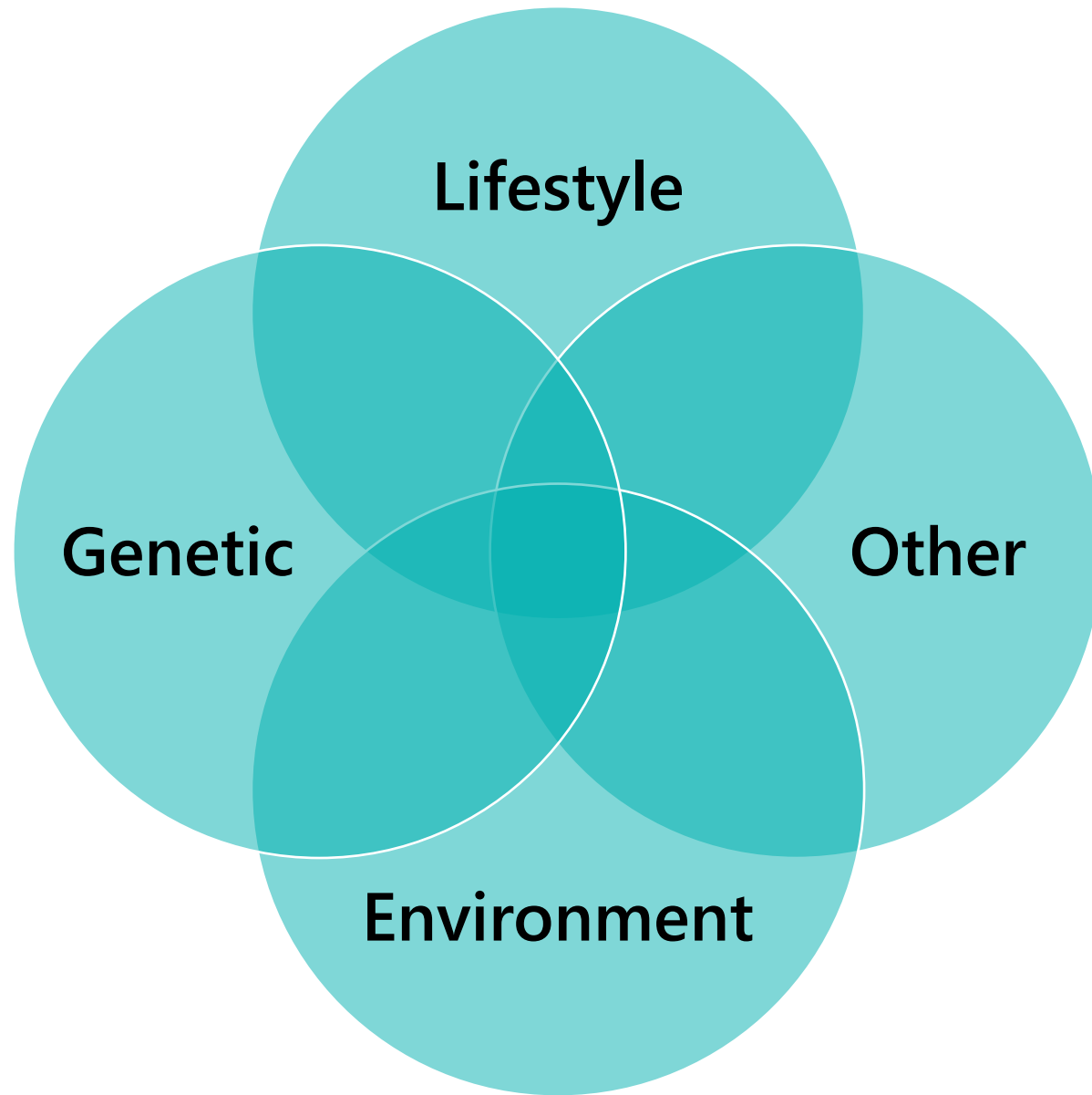
There is no one cause of cancer; it is a combination of different **genetic, lifestyle, and environmental** risk factors that change the function of cells



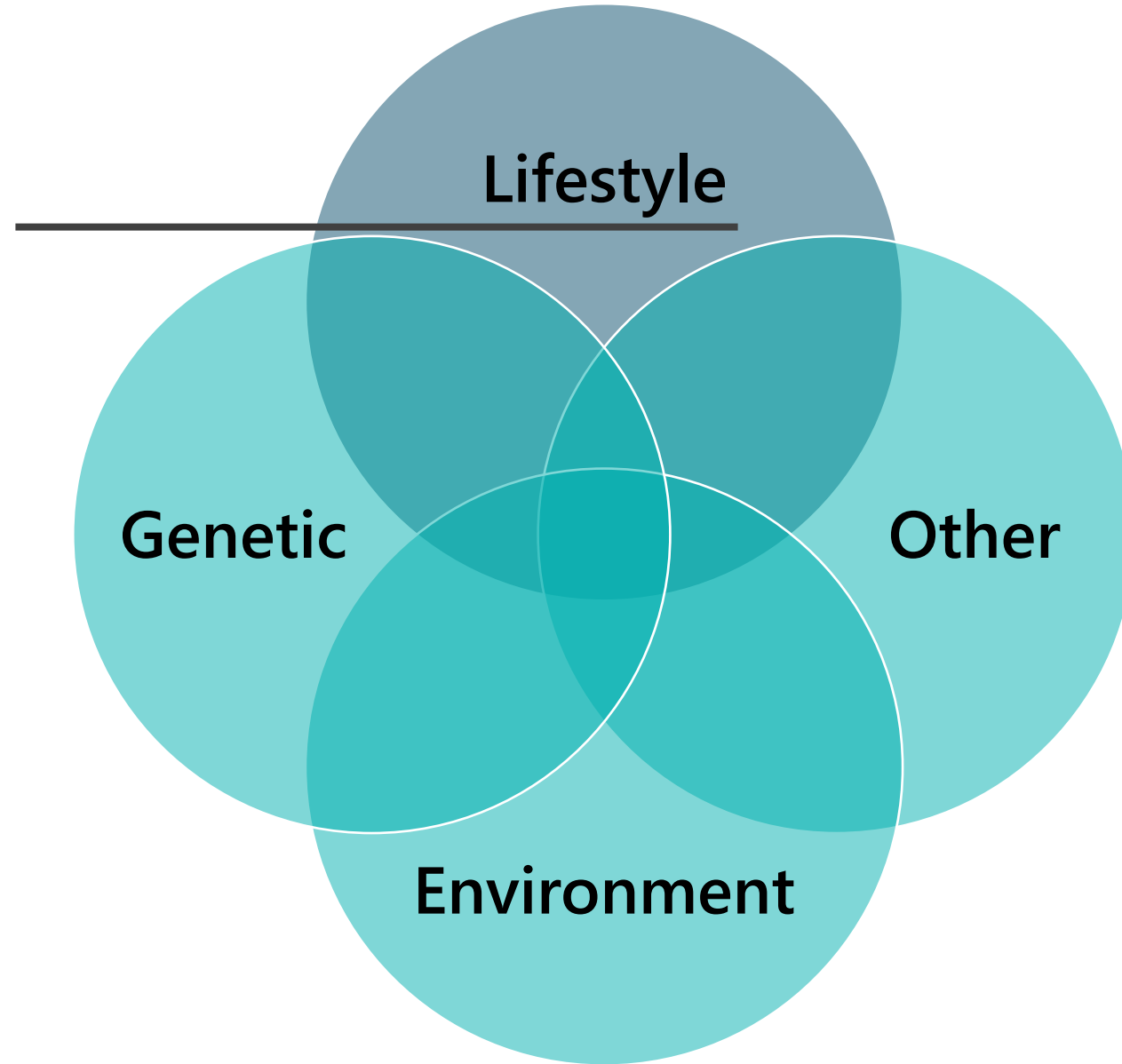
Cancer is Complicated

Risk factors are things that increase your chances of getting cancer

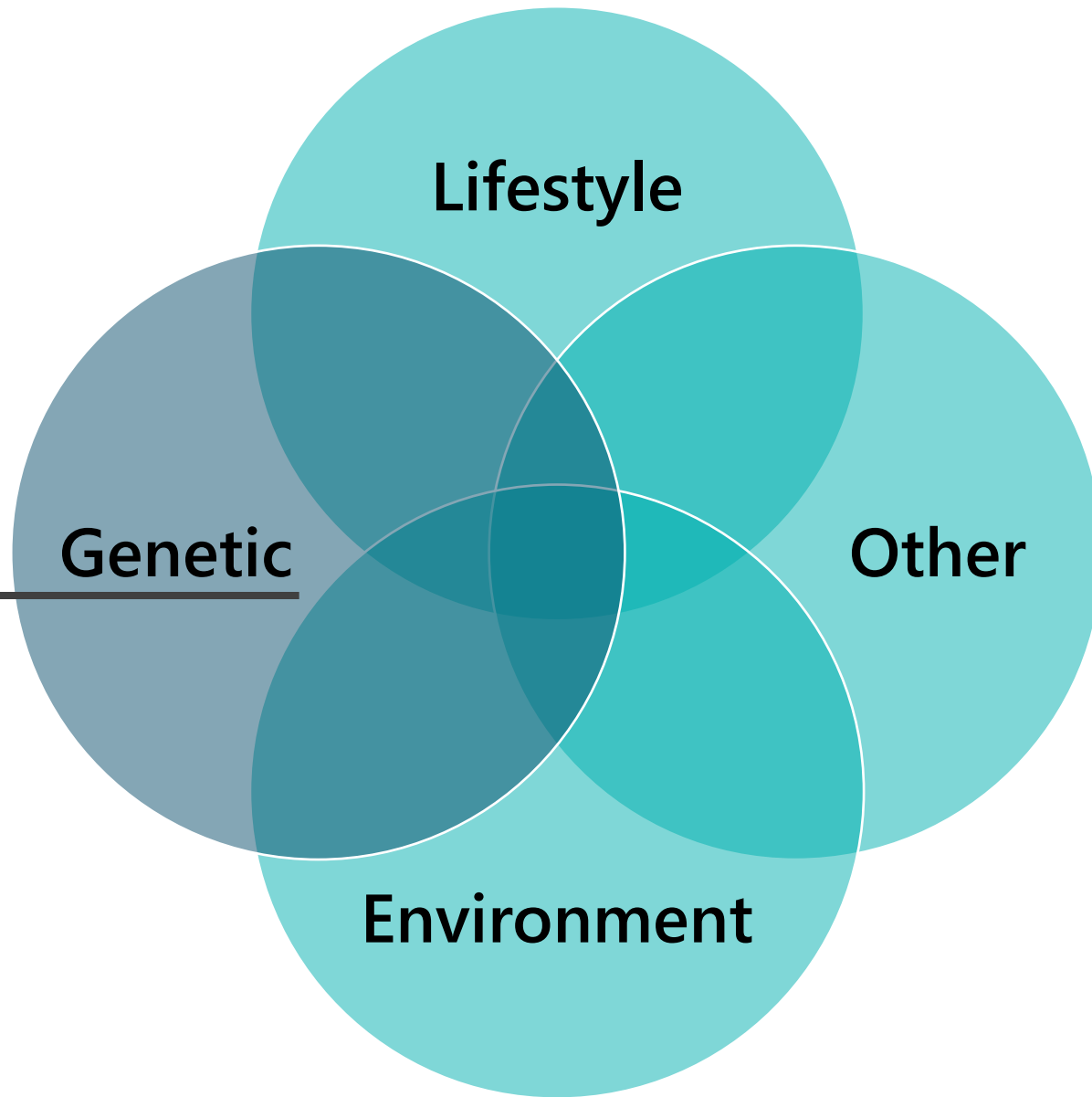


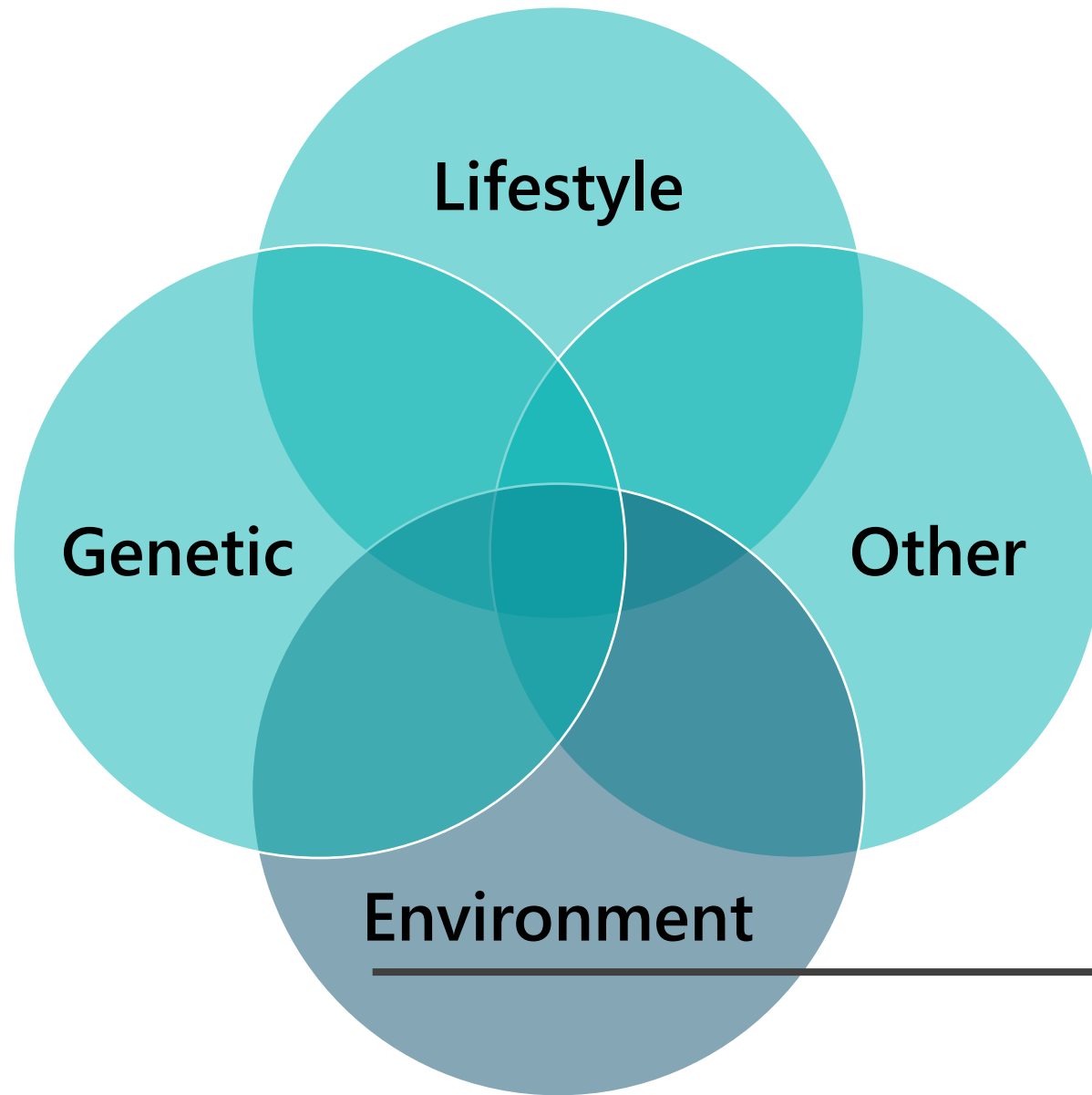


- Tobacco
- Alcohol
- Unhealthy diet
- Not being physically active
- Sunburns

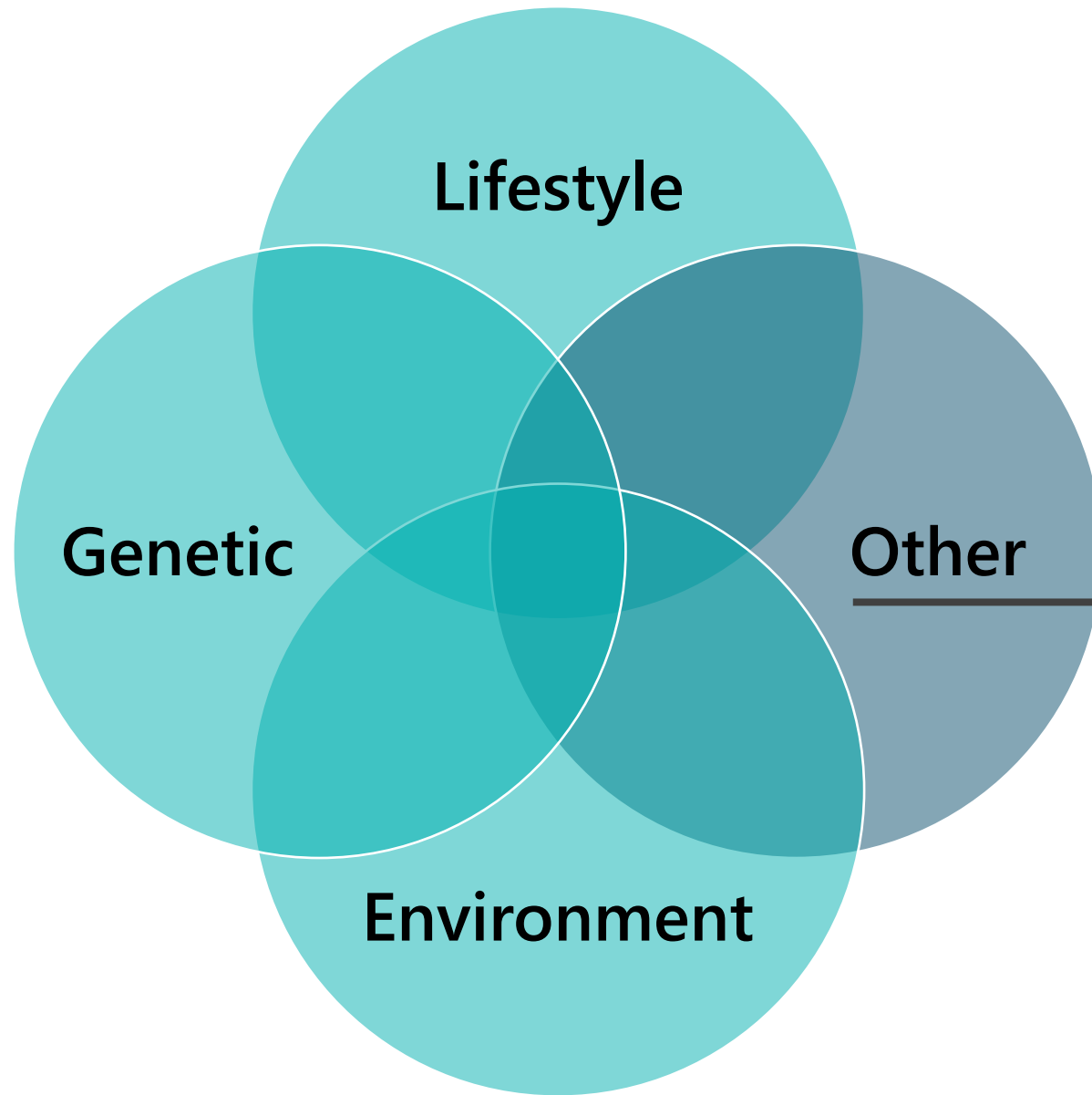


- Family history of cancer
- Random mutations





- Exposure to chemicals
- Radiation



- **Aging**
- **Viruses**
(HPV, Hepatitis B)
- **Medical conditions**
like chronic
inflammation

Cancer & the Environment

- Many Iowans understandably have questions about potential links between environmental exposures and cancer
- This is an important area of continued research, and Iowans are right to ask questions and be cautious
- ICR, along with other population-based cancer registries, do not collect data on environmental risk factors, but we do share our data with researchers to support studies of cancer & environmental risk factors

Risk Factors

- There can be many years between exposure to risk factors & cancer development, which makes it difficult to prove connections.
 - For example, lung cancer may not occur until 30 years after a person starts smoking
- Today we will focus on things you can do to reduce your cancer risk. These things can be addressed at the state, community, and individual levels.



Key Terms

Incidence & Mortality

- Incidence
 - Number of **new cases** of cancer occurring during a specified time period in a population
- Mortality
 - Number of **deaths** from cancer that occur during a specified time period in a population

Rates & Counts

- Counts
 - The **number** of new cases diagnosed or deaths from cancer
- Age-Adjusted Rates
 - Addresses the question: *If the size and age of the populations were the same, would there be a difference in rates?*
 - Adjusts the counts to give a **# per 100,000 people**

Stage definition used today

- **Early Stage includes**
 - **Localized:** cancer is limited to the place where it started, with no sign that it has spread
- **Late Stage includes**
 - **Regional:** cancer has spread to nearby lymph nodes, tissues, or organs
 - **Distant:** cancer has spread to distant parts of the body

<https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/diagnosis-staging/staging>

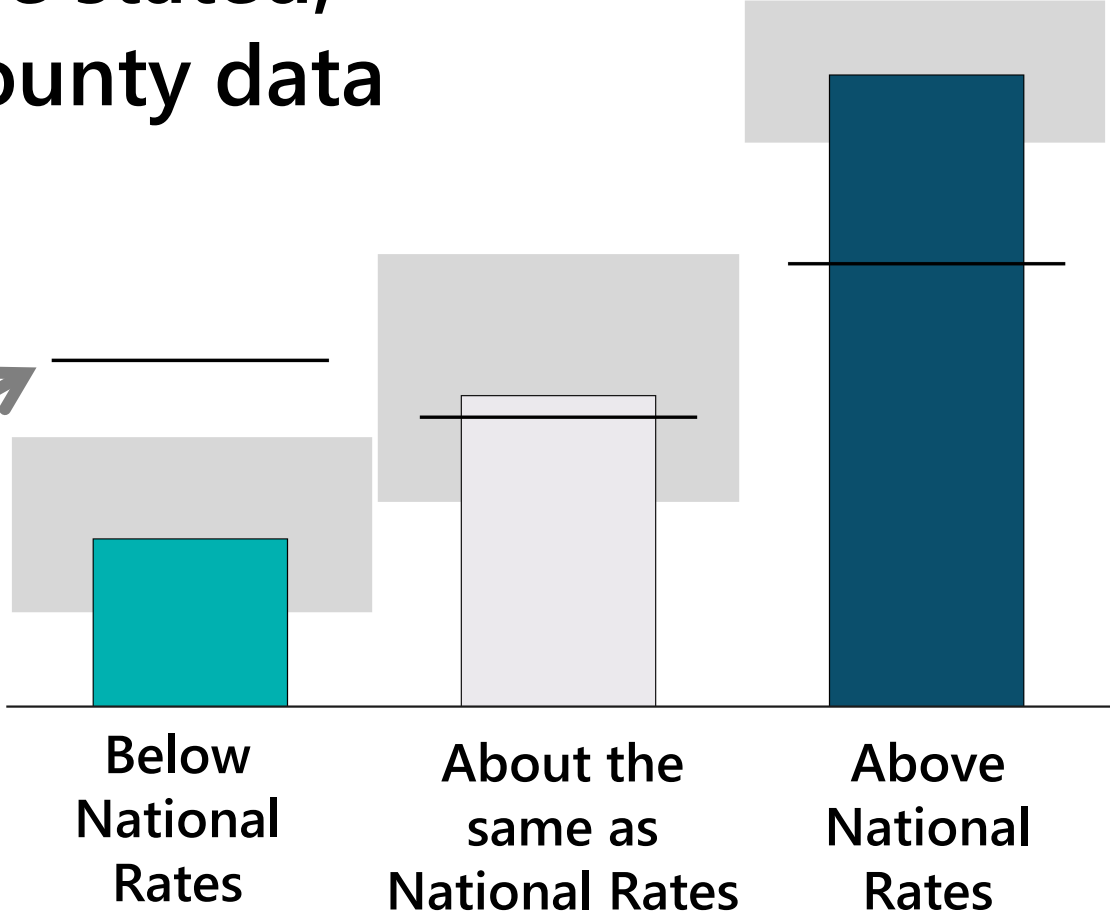
How to read the graphs

Unless otherwise stated,
bars are your county data

Grey boxes on
bar graphs are
95% Confidence
Intervals.

These are used to
determine if rates
are statistically
different from
each other

Black lines on
bar graphs
are United
States data





Cancer in Fayette County

New Cancers in Fayette County

All cancer types, average counts and rates, 2018-2022

Each year, there are about

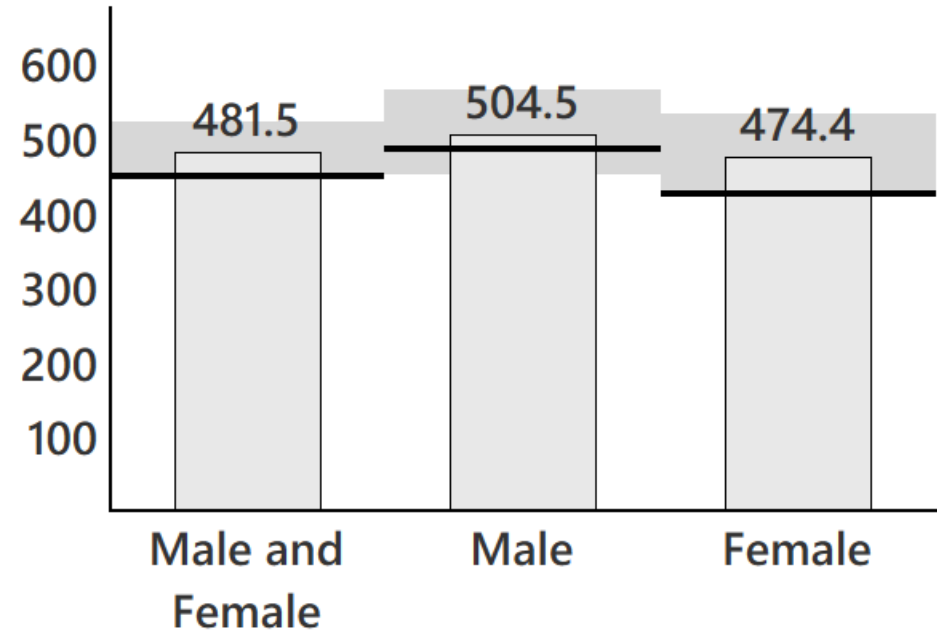
142

new cancers diagnosed in
Fayette County

Cancer incidence rates in Fayette County
are **Similar to National Average**

Ranks #73 of 99 counties

Cancer incidence rates are typically
higher in men than women



Age-Adjusted incidence rate per 100,000 (2018-2022)

Cancer deaths in Fayette County

All cancer types, average counts and rates, 2019-2023

Each year, there are about

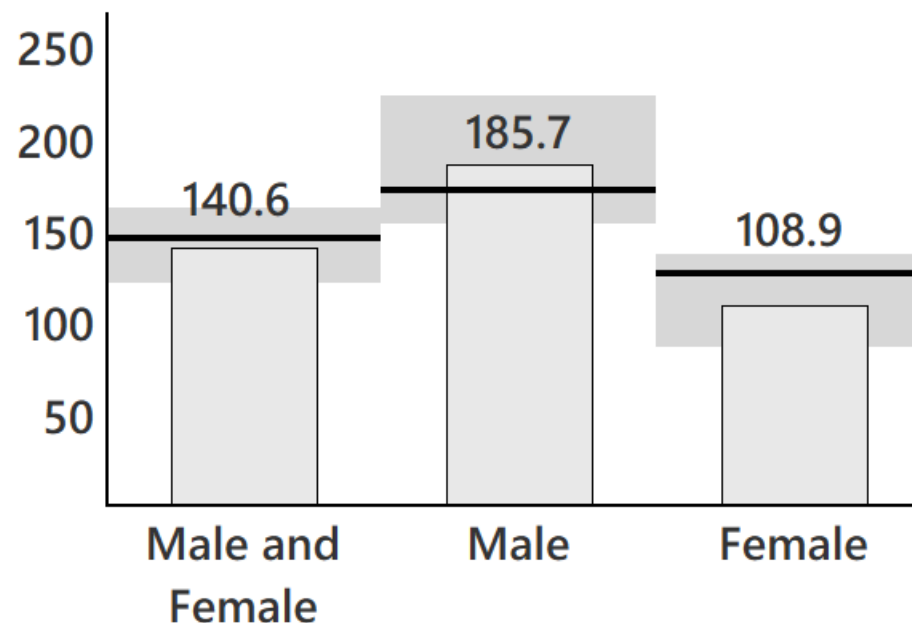
44

cancer deaths in Fayette County

Cancer mortality rates in Fayette County are **Similar to National Average**

Ranks #70 of 99 counties

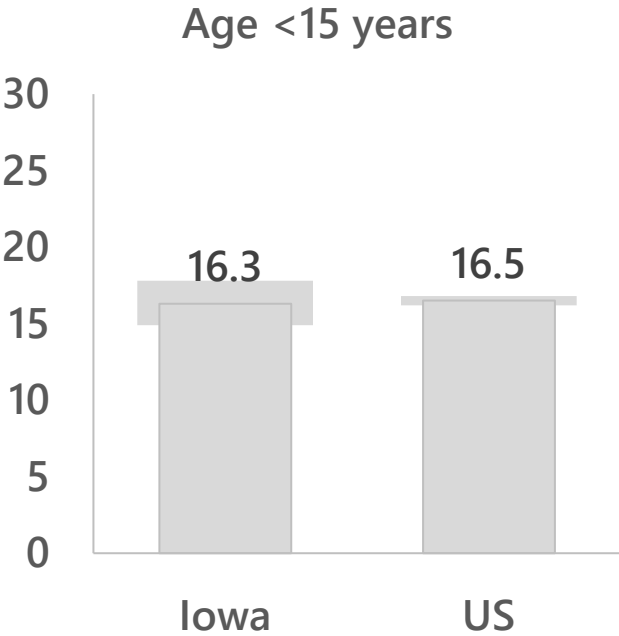
Cancer mortality rates are typically higher in men than women



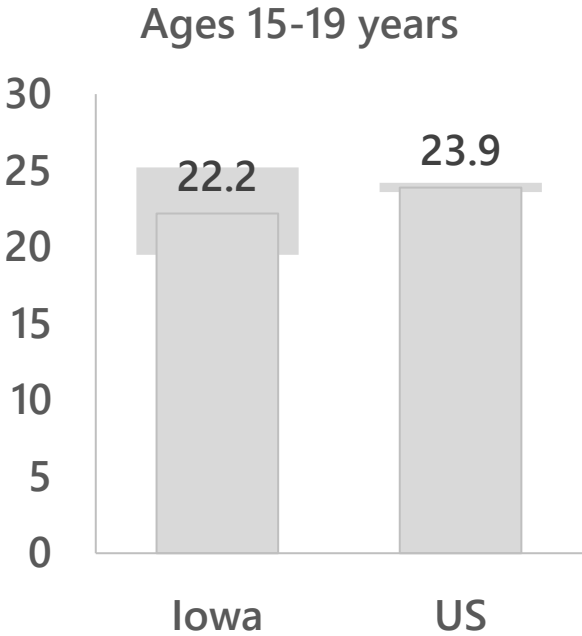
Age-Adjusted mortality rate per 100,000 (2019-2023)

Pediatric, Adolescent, and Young Adult New Cancers in Iowa

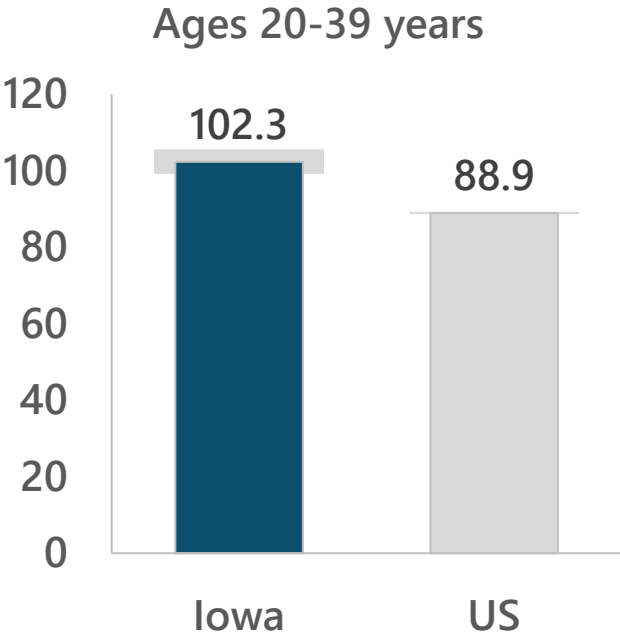
Pediatric cancer incidence rates in Iowa are **not different** than the U.S. rate



Adolescent cancer incidence rates in Iowa are **not different** than the U.S. rate

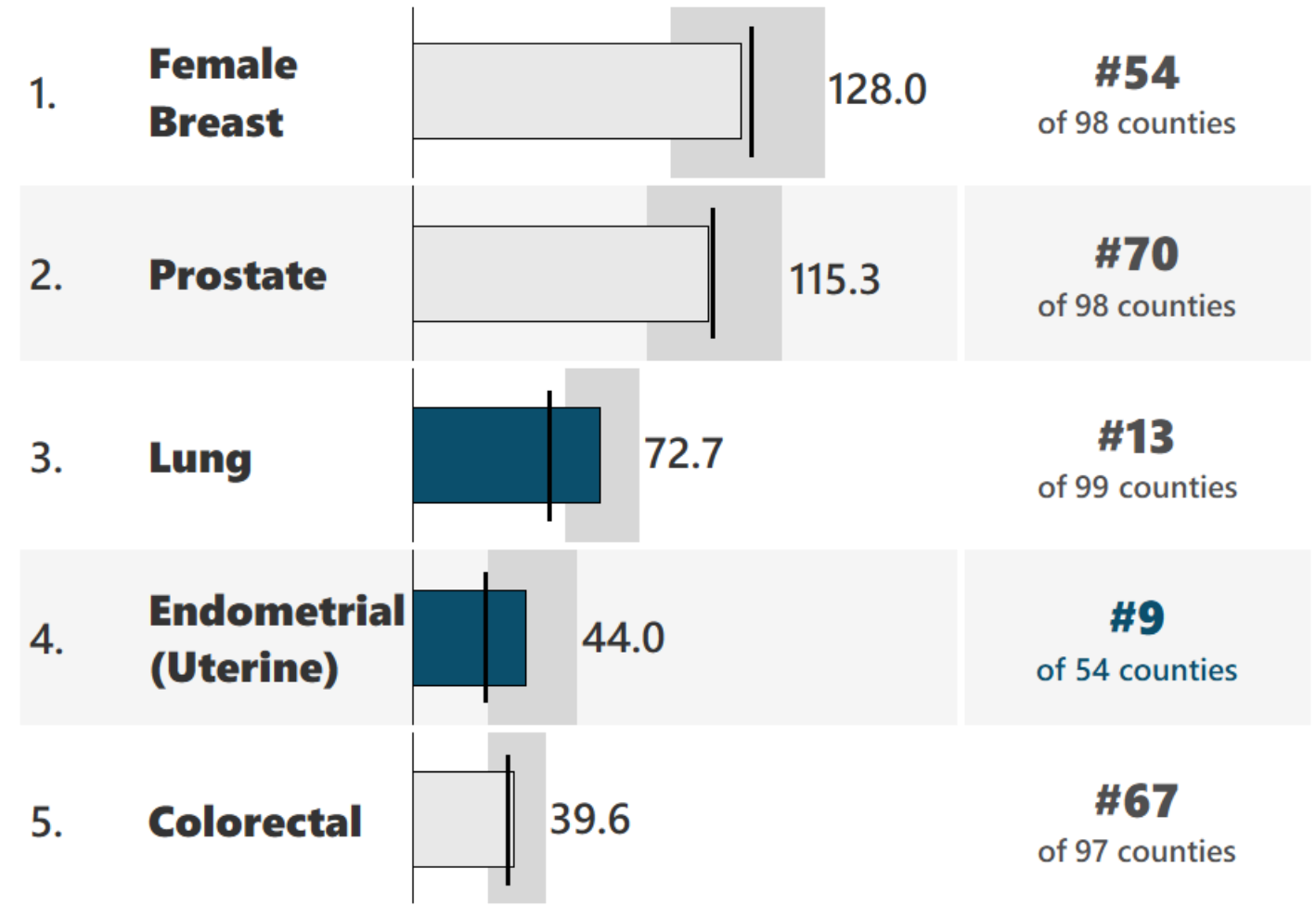


Young Adult cancer incidence rates in Iowa are **higher** than the U.S. rate



Age-Adjusted incidence rate per 100,000 (2018-2022)

Top cancers in Fayette County



Age-Adjusted incidence rate per 100,000 (2018-2022)

Rank compared to other counties, where #1 is highest in the state

1 | Female Breast

Each year in Fayette County,
there are about...

18

New Cases per year

Fayette County

128.0

Statewide

137.3

United States

131.4

<6

Deaths per year

Fayette County

**Too few cases to show rates*

Statewide

17.4

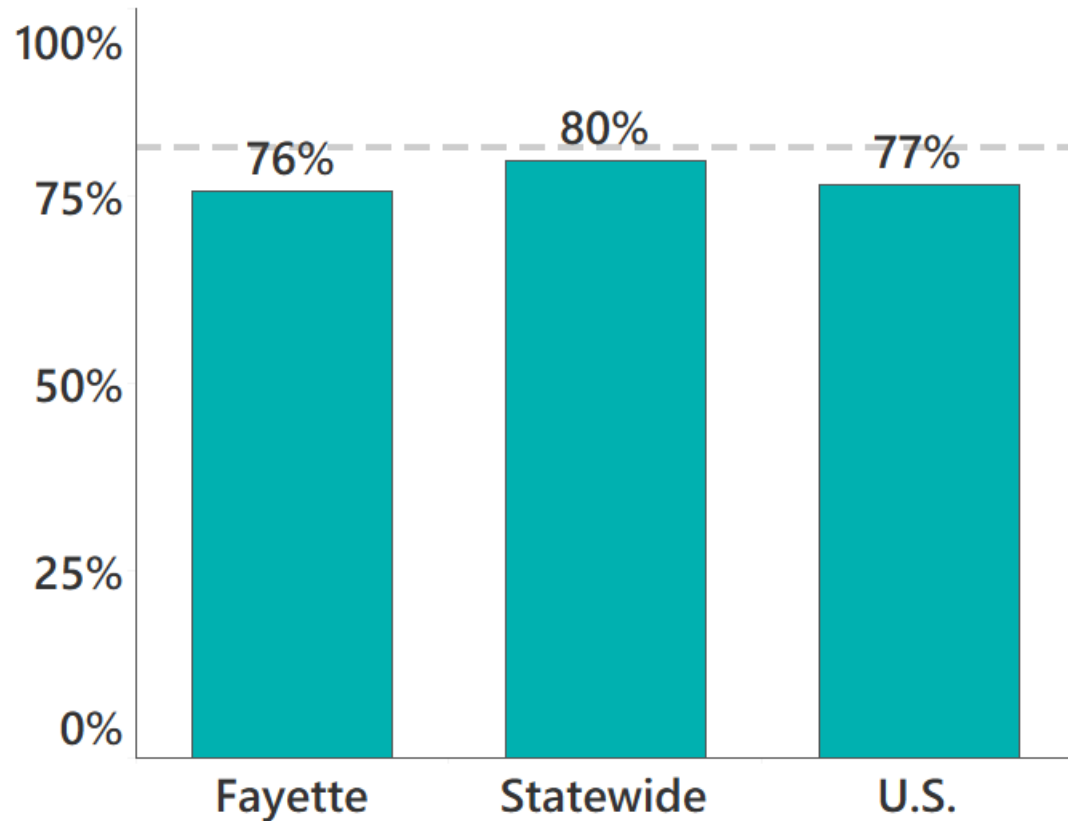
United States

19.2

Age-Adjusted Rate per 100,000
Incidence (2018-2022); Mortality (2019-2023)

Breast Cancer Screening

Women age 50+ who are up to date with their breast cancer screening



Screening Guidelines

Women ages 40-74 should screen with a mammogram every 2 years

Talk to your doctor if you have a family history of breast cancer

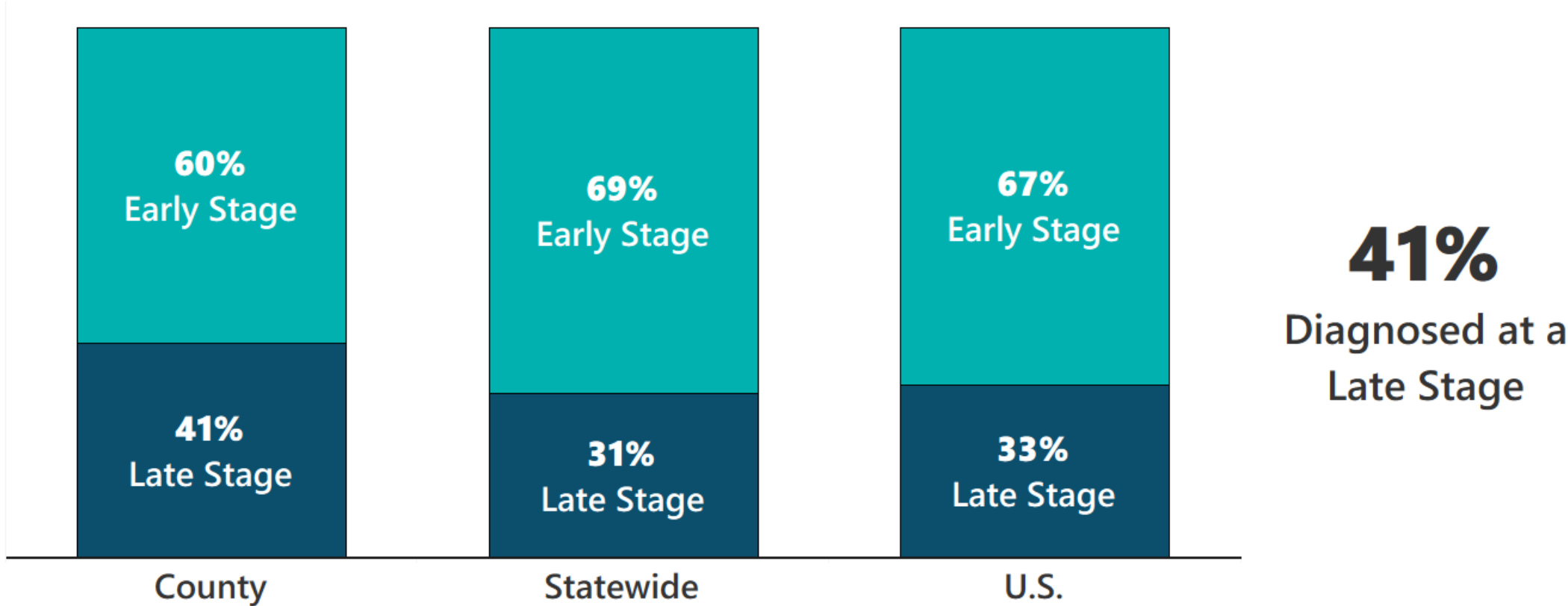
(U.S. Prevention Services Task Force)

Data from 2022 survey

Iowa Cancer Plan Goal: 81.4% by 2027

1 | Female Breast Cancer Stage at Diagnosis

Early stage = Easier to treat, Higher survival rates



The Care for Yourself – Breast and Cervical Cancer Program (CFY-BCC)

We provide free breast and cervical cancer screenings across Iowa.

- ▶ CFY-BCC is also called the Iowa Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program.
- ▶ CFY-BCC serves Iowans between 21 and 64 years of age.
- ▶ Are at or earn less than 250% of the Federal Poverty Level.
- ▶ Call (866) 339-7909 to speak to a confidential coordinator immediately.
- ▶ CFY-BCC coordinators are available to help you Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

<https://hhs.iowa.gov/public-health/cancer/cfy>



2 | Prostate

Each year in Fayette County,
there are about...

17

New Cases per year

<6

Deaths per year

Fayette County

115.3

Statewide

129.5

United States

116.5

Fayette County

28.2

Statewide

19.6

United States

19.2

Age-Adjusted Rate per 100,000
Incidence (2018-2022); Mortality (2019-2023)

Prostate Cancer Screening

Screening Guidelines

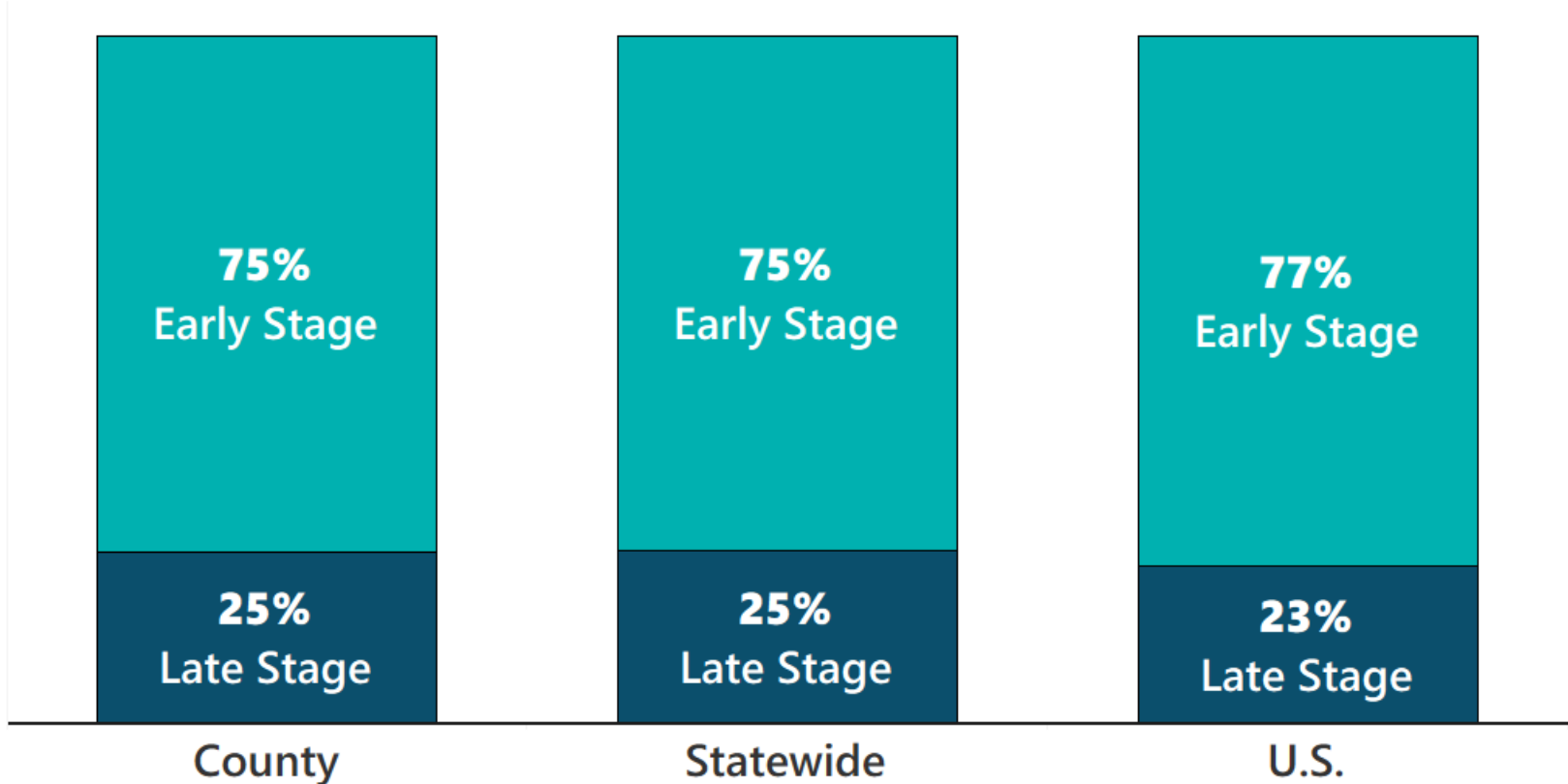
Screening test: Prostate-specific antigen (PSA) blood test

Men who are 55-69 years old, discuss with your doctor if a PSA test is right for you

(U.S. Preventative Services Task Force)

2 | Prostate Cancer Stage at Diagnosis

Early stage = Easier to treat, Higher survival rates



25%
Diagnosed at a
Late Stage

Data from 2013-2022

3 | Lung

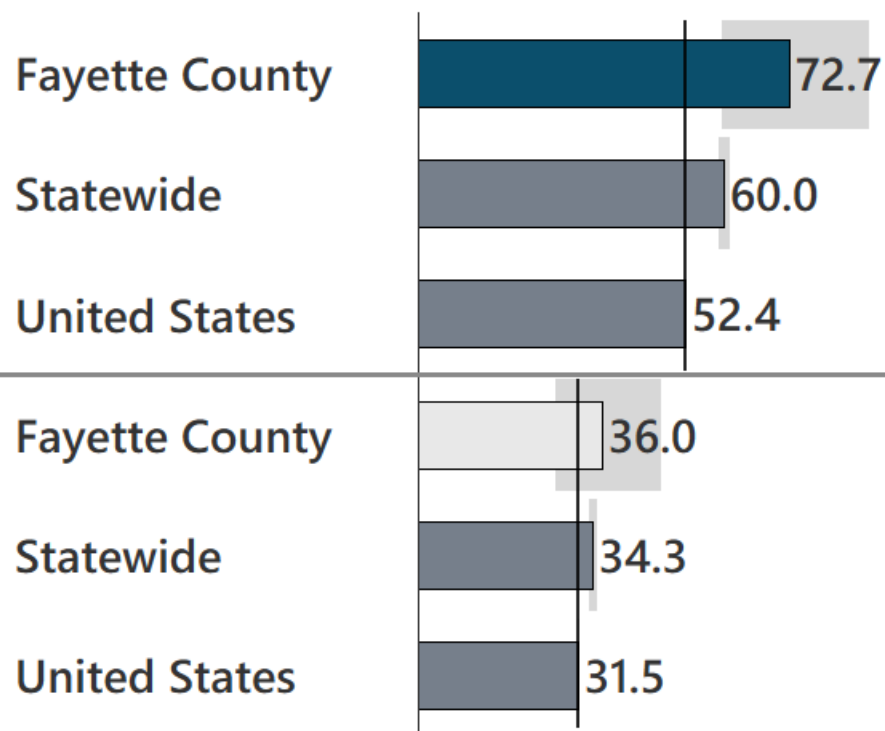
Each year in Fayette County,
there are about...

23

New Cases per year

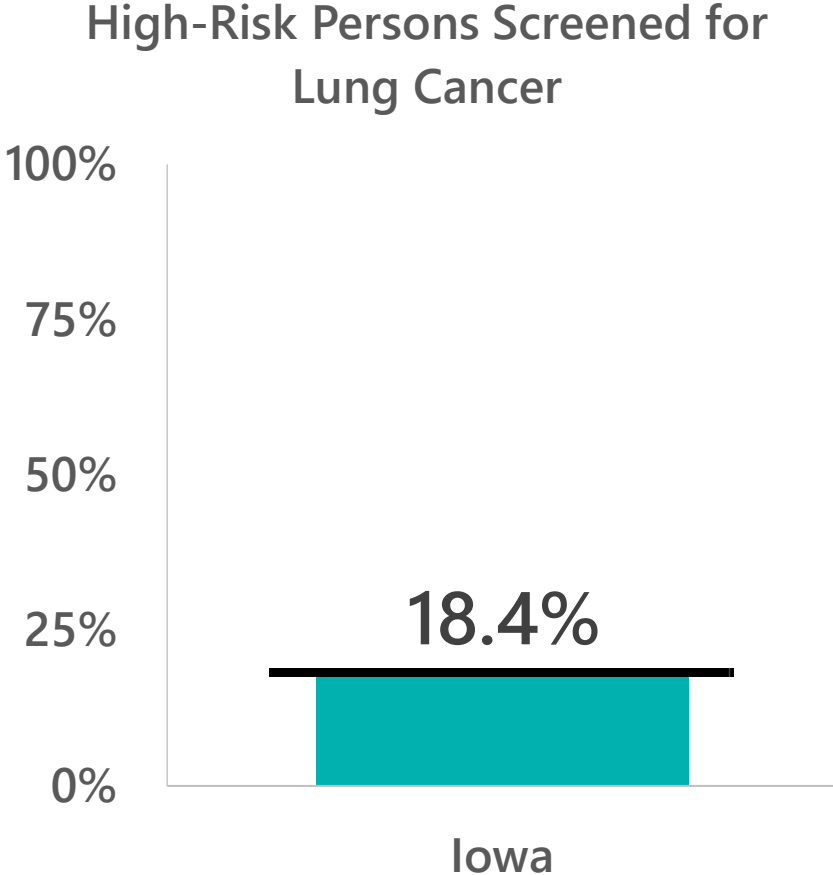
11

Deaths per year



Age-Adjusted Rate per 100,000
Incidence (2018-2022); Mortality (2019-2023)

Lung Cancer Screening



Screening Guidelines

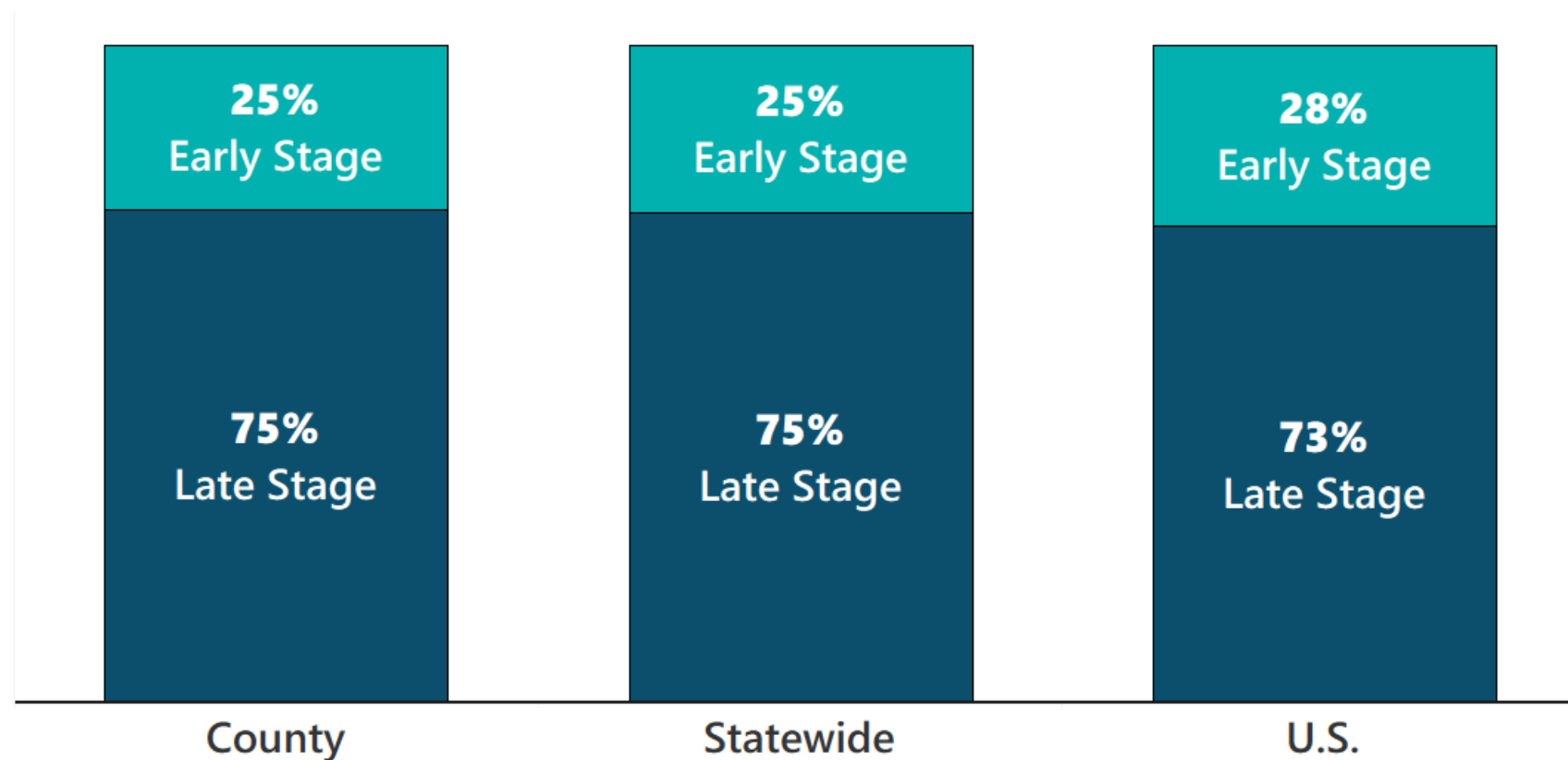
Low-dose CT scan

If you have smoked in the last 15 years and are between the ages 50-80 years talk to your doctor about being screened for lung cancer

(U.S. Preventative Services Task Force)

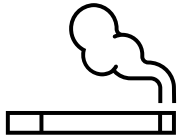
3 | Lung Cancer Stage at Diagnosis

Early stage = Easier to treat, Higher survival rates



75%
Diagnosed at a
Late Stage

Lung Cancer Risk Factors



Smoking is #1 cause of lung cancer



Radon is #2 leading cause of lung cancer
Test your home for radon and mitigate

People who smoke that are exposed to radon are at a **10 to 20 times higher** risk of developing lung cancer than non-smokers

Learn more about Radon testing and mitigation:

Iowa Health & Human Services

hhs.iowa.gov/radiological-health/radon

Iowa Cancer Consortium

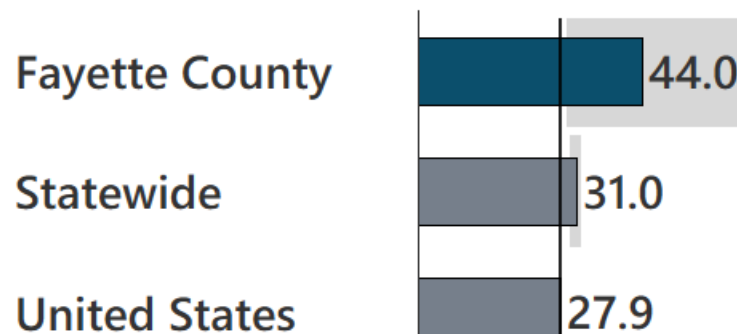
canceriowa.org/radon/

4 | Endometrial (Uterine)

Each year in Fayette County,
there are about...

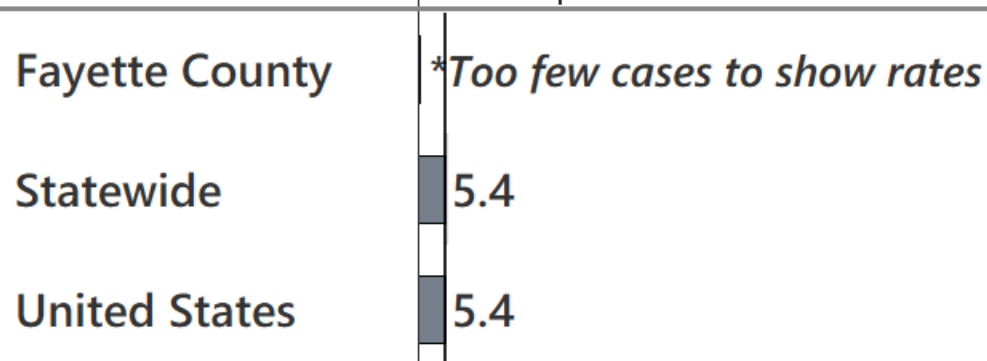
6

New Cases per year



<6

Deaths per year



Age-Adjusted Rate per 100,000
Incidence (2018-2022); Mortality (2019-2023)

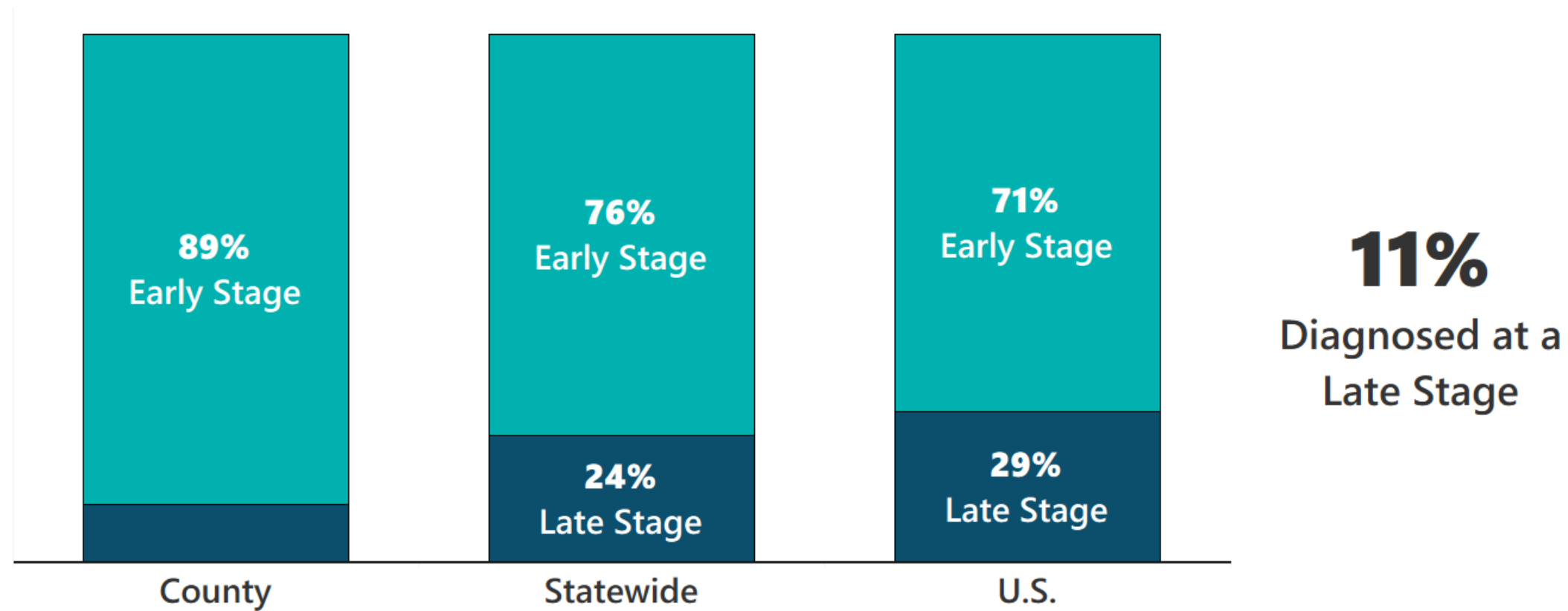
Endometrial (Uterine Cancer)

Talk to your doctor if you experience...

- Vaginal bleeding or discharge not related to menstruation (periods)
- Vaginal bleeding after menopause
- Difficult or painful urination
- Pain during sexual intercourse
- Pain in the pelvic area

4 | Endometrial (Uterine) Cancer Stage at Diagnosis

Early stage = Easier to treat, Higher survival rates



5 | Colorectal

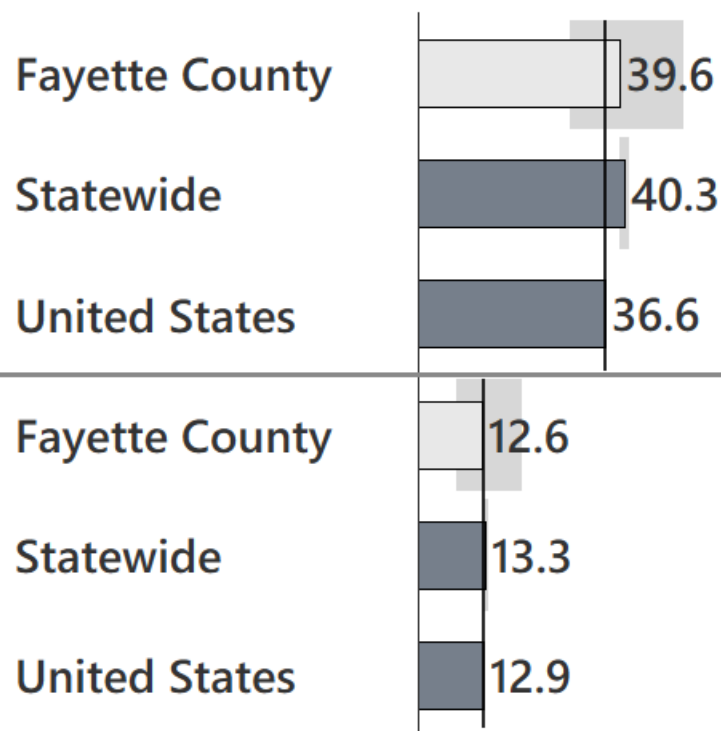
Each year in Fayette County,
there are about...

12

New Cases per year

<6

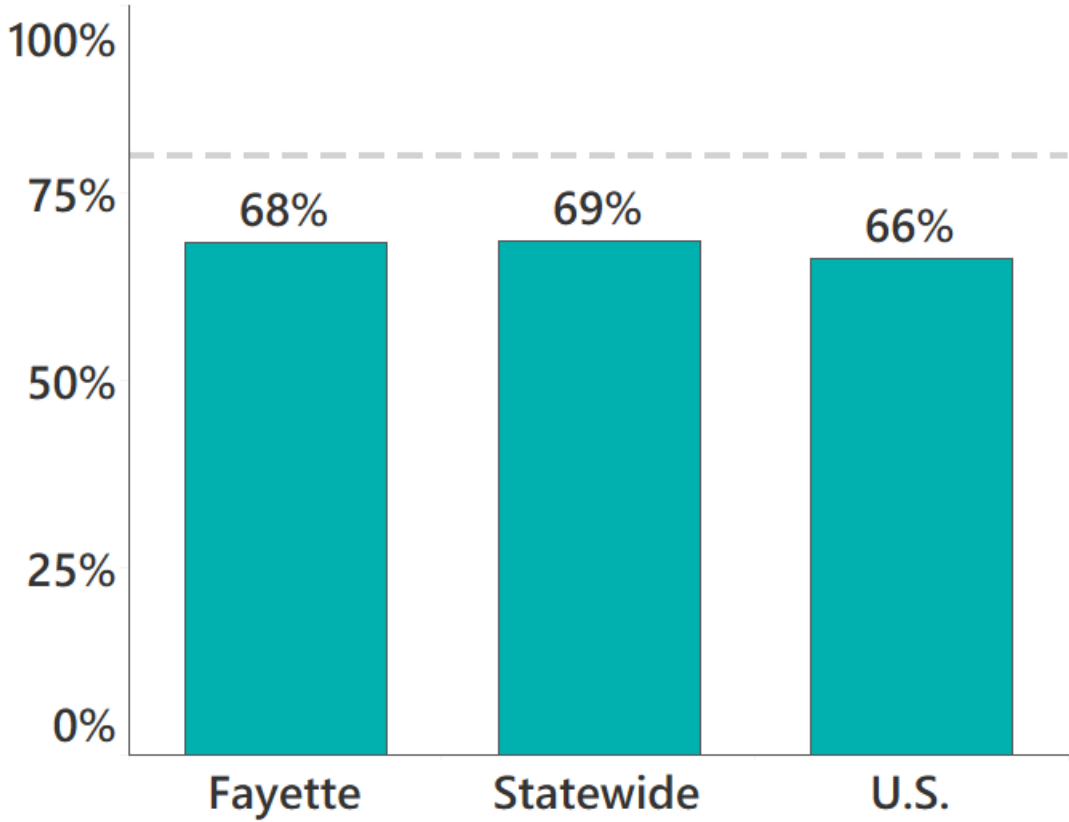
Deaths per year



Age-Adjusted Rate per 100,000
Incidence (2018-2022); Mortality (2019-2023)

Colorectal Cancer Screening

Adults ages 45-75 who are up to date with their colorectal cancer screening



Screening Guidelines

Adults ages 45-75 can screen with either (1) an at-home, stool-based test, or (2) a colonoscopy.

Talk to your doctor about which is best for you.

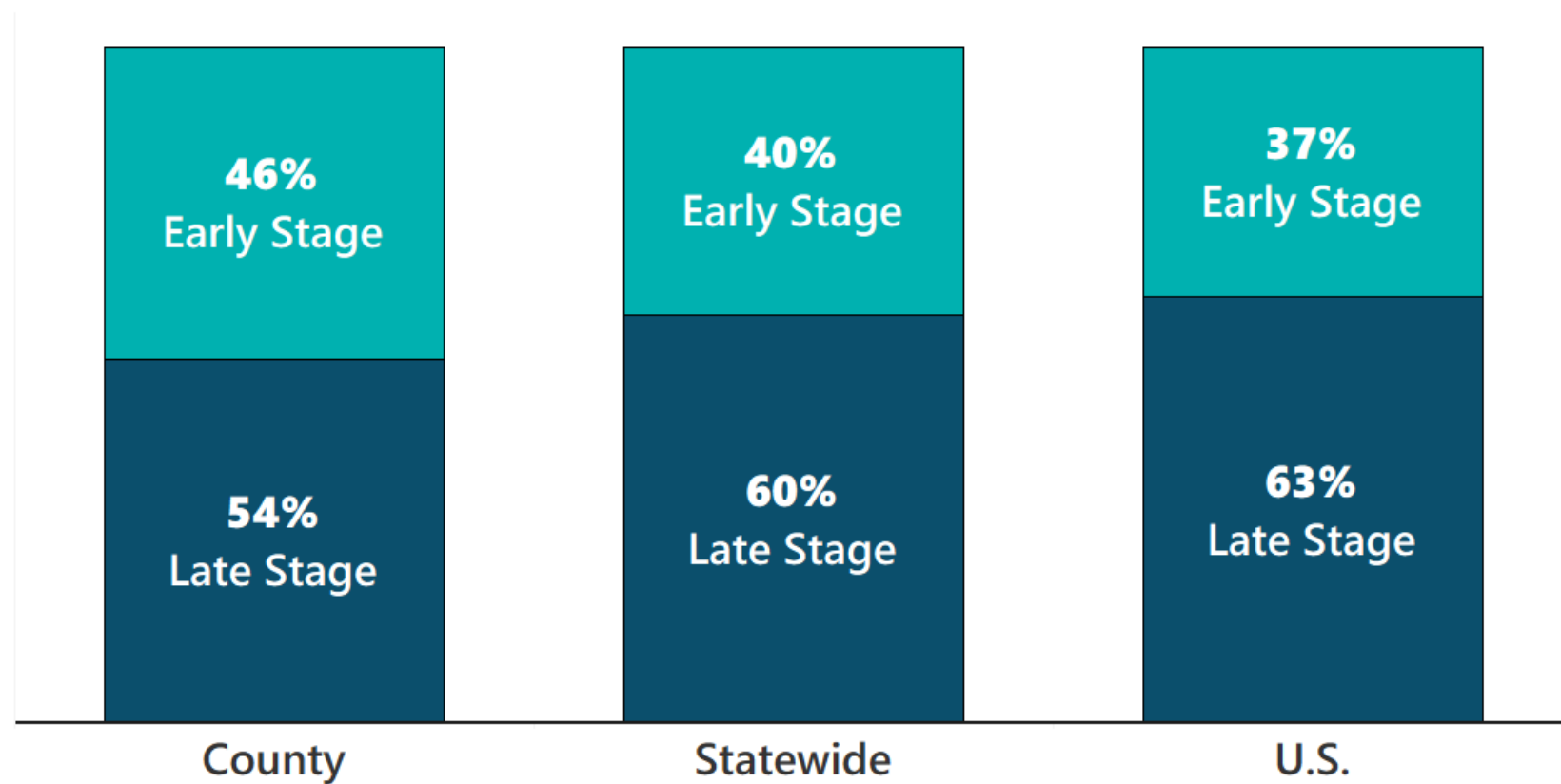
(U.S. Prevention Services Task Force)

*Data from 2022 survey
Iowa Cancer Plan Goal: 80% by 2027*



5 | Colorectal Cancer Stage at Diagnosis

Early stage = Easier to treat, Higher survival rates



54%
Diagnosed at a
Late Stage

Iowa Get Screened (IGS): Colorectal Cancer Program

We partner with Iowa's Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) and local public health agencies to increase colorectal cancer screening.

Through a collaboration with the Iowa Primary Care Association (Iowa PCA) and FQHCs, the program serves low-income Iowans, ages 45-75, to:

- ▶ Increase the number of cancers prevented
- ▶ Increase the diagnosis of early-stage colorectal cancer
- ▶ Reduce colorectal cancer incidence and mortality in the state



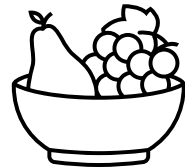
<https://hhs.iowa.gov/public-health/cancer/colorectal-cancer-screening-program>

How can you reduce your risk for cancer?

~**40%** of cancers in the US are attributable to modifiable risk factors (i.e., smoking, alcohol, diet, infections, etc.)



Do not smoke or use any form of tobacco
Make your home smoke-free



Enjoy a healthy diet



Avoid too much sun, use sun protection



Limit alcohol consumption



Be physically active



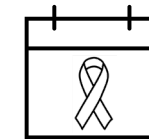
Vaccinate against Hepatitis B and HPV



Reduce indoor and outdoor air pollution (including radon)



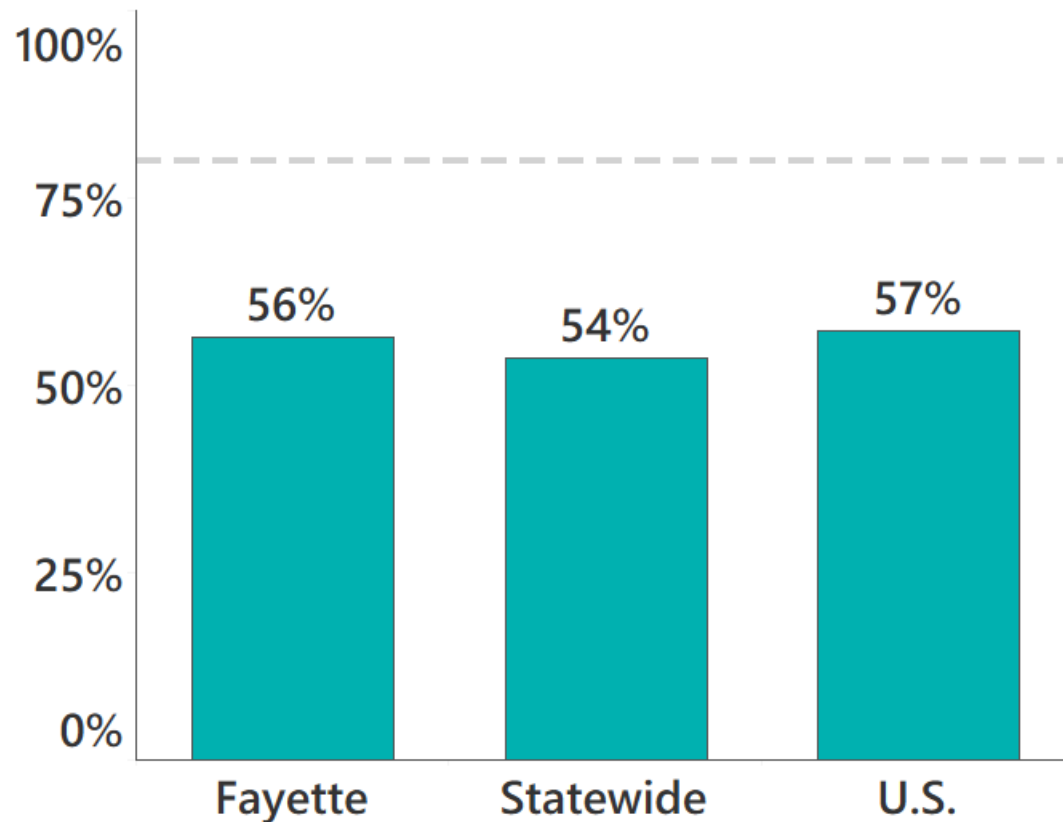
Decrease excess body weight



Get the appropriate cancer screenings for you!

A vaccine that prevents cancer: HPV

Adolescents ages 13-15 who have completed their HPV vaccine series (2023)

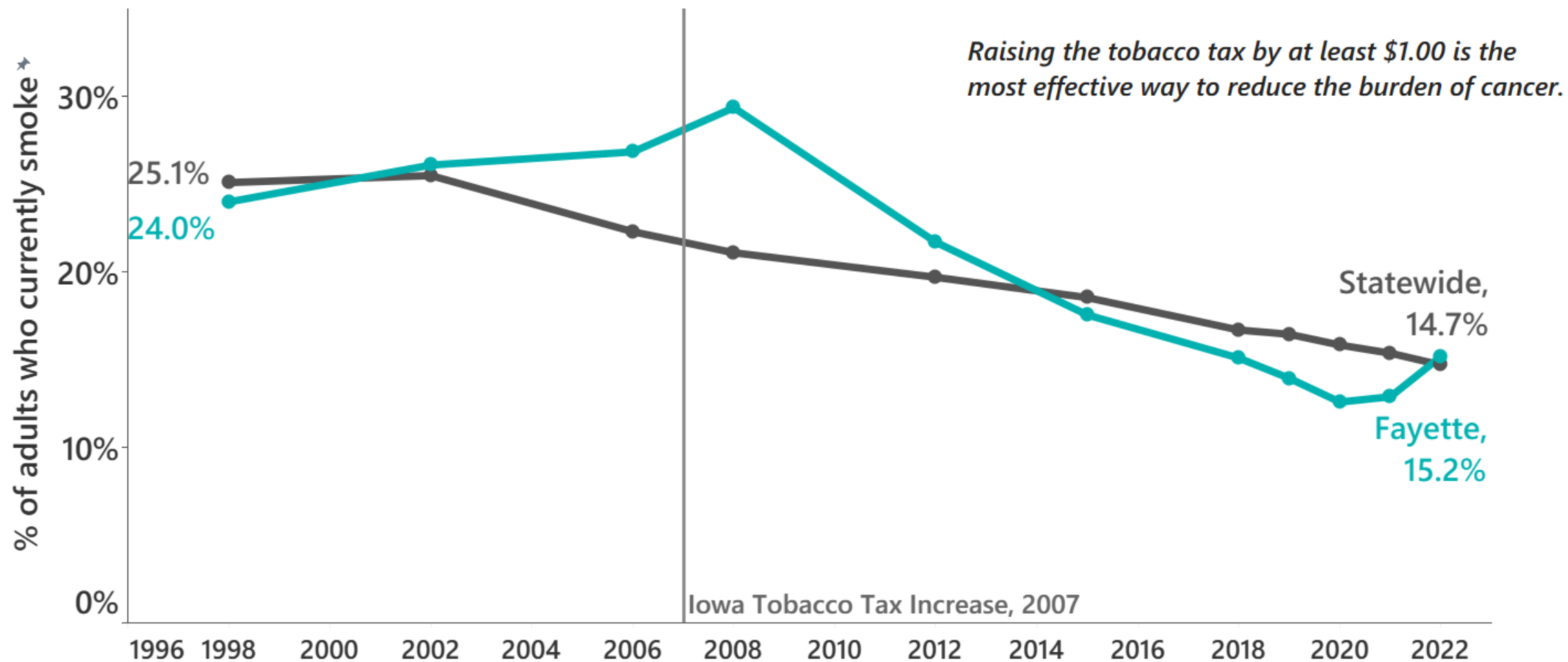


- HPV infection can cause cancers of the cervix, mouth and throat, anus, rectum, penis, vulva, and vagina.
- Iowa has the highest rate of oropharyngeal cancer in the U.S.
- Vaccine provides safe, effective, and lasting protection against HPV, thus reducing cancer risk
- Recommended at age 11 or 12 years, when immune response is best & before HPV exposure

Iowa Cancer Plan Goal: 80% by 2027

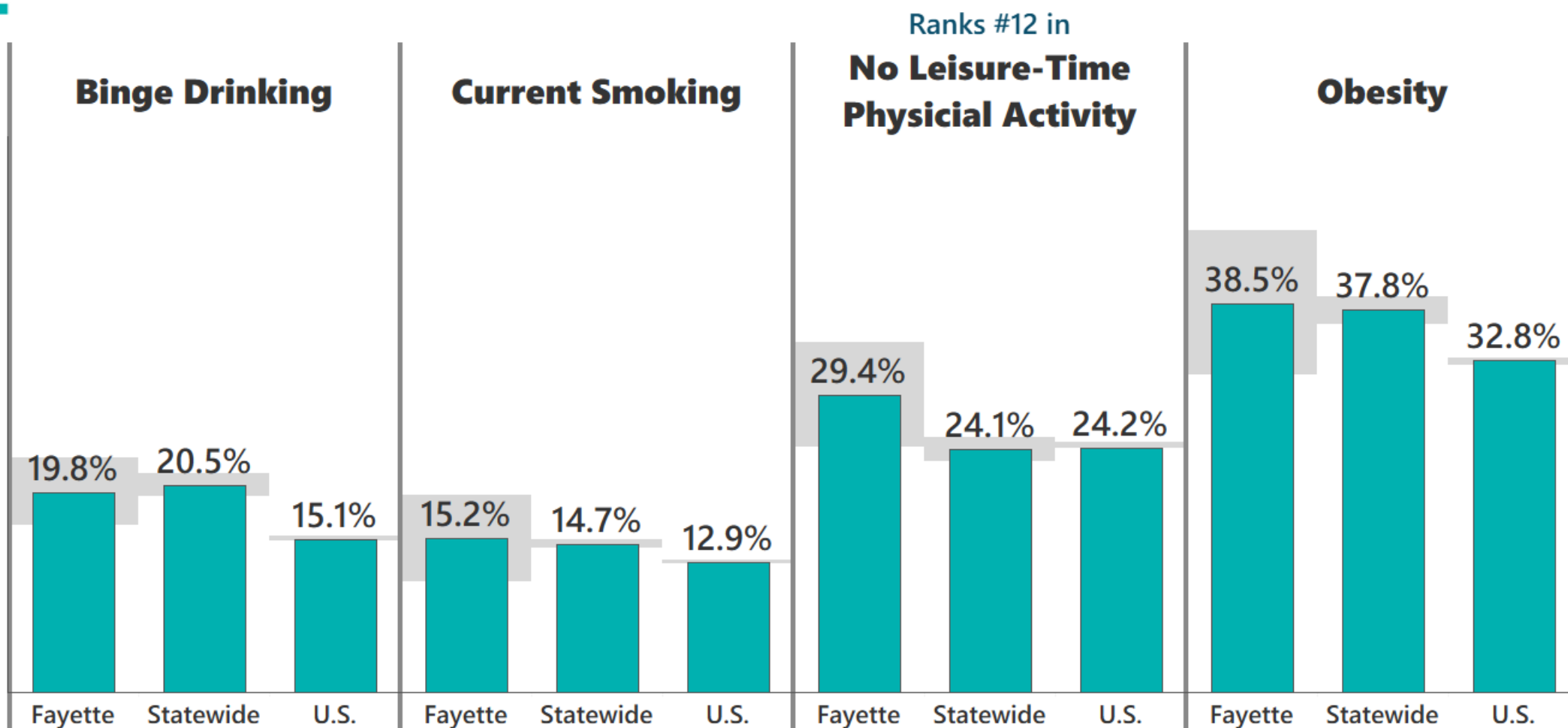
After the last increase to the tobacco tax was passed in 2007, smoking rates **decreased*** in Fayette County

**Determined by comparing data from 2004-2007 combined to 2011-2013 combined*



Other Cancer Risk Factors

Lower
is
better



Want to know your cancer risk?

Take the American Cancer Society's cancer risk assessment to learn more about what factors might affect your personal cancer risk and actions you can take to help lower your risk.

<https://acscancerrisk360.cancer.org/>



Resources to help understand and address cancer in Iowa communities

Iowa Comprehensive Cancer Control Program (CCCP)

Work with partners to prevent cancer whenever possible and support cancer survivors across Iowa.

- ▶ The CCCP partners with many organizations, including the Iowa Cancer Consortium, Iowa's cancer coalition.
- ▶ CCCP is involved in the revision and implementation of the Iowa Cancer Plan.
- ▶ Currently CCCP is focused on increasing HPV vaccination, increasing lung cancer screening, and supporting cancer survivors.

<https://hhs.iowa.gov/public-health/cancer>
<https://canceriowa.org/iowa-cancer-plan/>



Iowa Cancer Consortium

Mission: To advance cancer prevention and control through advocacy, equity, and collaboration.

Vision: An Iowa where cancer is not a burden.

A non-profit cancer coalition that provides

- Connections and partnership
- Latest news and cancer updates via email
- Training and educational opportunities
- Grant opportunities and technical assistance
- Free cancer educational materials for distribution
- Virtually-hosted workgroups
- The Iowa Cancer Plan

www.canceriowa.org

Funded in part through a contract with the Iowa CCCP

Blueprint for cancer control, the Iowa Cancer Plan

Chapters with sections that include priorities, strategies, and specific action steps which may be tailored to many settings to guide cancer control activities.

- 1. Health Equity:** identify and eliminate cancer health disparities.
- 2. Prevention and Risk Reduction:** whenever possible, prevent cancer from occurring.
- 3. Early Detection and Screening:** promote the benefits of screening tests to ensure early diagnosis.
- 4. Diagnosis and Cancer-Directed Therapy:** reduce barriers to care, promote evidence-based practices, and encourage participation in clinical trials and other forms of research.
- 5. Survivorship and End-of-Life Care:** ensure resources to optimize quality-of-life for cancer survivors and their families.



Iowa Cancer Plan

2 0 2 3 - 2 0 2 7



[https://canceriowa.org/
iowa-cancer-plan/](https://canceriowa.org/iowa-cancer-plan/)

"There is a lot we know about how to reduce our personal cancer risk. There is opportunity for the biggest impact when policies help us do that.

Effective policies

- make the healthy choice easier
- make the unhealthy choice harder
- provide protections from risk factors that are out of an individual's control"

- Iowa Cancer Consortium

Policy Examples

State-level

- Increase the tobacco tax by at least \$1.00
- Raise taxes on alcohol and set minimum unit prices
- Prohibit minors' use of tanning beds

Community & Organization-level

- Implementing tobacco- and nicotine-free policies
 - Zoning restrictions to prohibit tobacco shops from operating near schools or other tobacco retailers
 - Set and enforce limits on the number of places that sell alcohol and the distance between them
 - Reducing out-of-pocket costs for cessation treatments
 - Build communities that provide natural opportunity for physical activity (walkable/ bikeable/ accessible)
- Ensure access to affordable fresh food
 - Providing sunscreen and UV-safety education in outdoor occupational, recreation/tourism, and childcare settings
 - Engaging community health workers, developing clinic-specific interventions, and supporting care navigation
 - Include cancer-relevant strategies in your hospital's community health needs assessments or public health department's needs assessment

More ways to get involved

American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network

Engage American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACSCAN) to promote cancer-relevant legislation

www.fightcancer.org



Contact your legislator

Find your legislator at

<https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislators/find>

Every community is different

Your expertise is key

Your expertise as community members and leaders and local policy makers **is key to answering the question of what to do next.**

You know best what your community needs and what will work.

Cancer control partners can help

Cancer control partners can provide ideas, advise, and help find data, evidence, and other resources, but *ultimately you are the experts.*

Take stock of the information presented today

A good place to start is by **taking stock of the information presented today**

- Where are opportunities for change within your county, town, or organization?
- Use the Iowa Cancer Plan for inspiration.
- Reach out to the Iowa Cancer Consortium for partnership in moving forward.

Iowa Private Well Grants Program

Iowa Health & Human Services

Iowa's [Private Well Grants Program](#) (PWG) provides free water testing to all private well owners and users for the analytes listed.

The Iowa DNR recommends that all private well owners have their water tested at least annually.

Analytes

- Bacteria/coliform (annually)
- E.coli/fecal coliform (annually)
- Nitrate (annually)
- Arsenic (every 3 years)
- Manganese (every 3 years)
- PFAS (requires pre-approval from the DNR)

Fayette County

Services available under the Private Well Grant: Cistern Abandonment, Private Well Water Sampling, Well Abandonment, Well Reconstruction, Review Well Assessments, Review Shock Chlorination's

To learn more contact: 563-422-3767

<https://fayettecounty.iowa.gov/departments/environmental-health/>

Fayette County Resources

Environmental Health Services

- New Well preconstruction evaluation & inspections during construction
- New Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems preconstruction evaluations & inspections during construction
- Troubleshoot issues with existing onsite wastewater treatment systems
- Information resource on any other environmental health related issue or concern

Radon Testing

Fayette County residents are encouraged to test their home every two years for radon. Radon test kits are available from the Environmental Health office at a cost of \$10.00 per kit.

Fayette County Environmental Health
114 N Vine St
West Union, Iowa 52175

<https://fayettecounty.iowa.gov/departments/environmental-health/>

Fayette County Resources

Vaccines for children (VFC)

The VFC Program provides vaccines for eligible children birth through 18 years at no cost to public and private health care providers throughout the state.

Healthy Fayette County Coalition

A Comprehensive Approach to Improving the Quality of Life for Fayette County Residents. Nutrition, Mental Health, and Prevention are the Coalition's priorities.

<https://healthyfayettecountya.com/>

Healthy Fayette Priorities

Nutrition

Nutrition team accomplishes the Healthy Fayette County Coalition mission and vision by promoting healthy lifestyles for the people in Fayette County. We seek to share resources for nutrition education and access to a variety of foods. Many groups are working together to provide help for everyone.

Mental Health

Mental Health team accomplishes the Healthy Fayette County Coalition mission and vision by promoting healthy lifestyles for the people in Fayette County. We seek to make it ok to ask for help and provide information on where to go for support.

Prevention

Prevention team accomplishes the Healthy Fayette County Coalition mission and vision by promoting healthy lifestyles for the people in Fayette County. We seek to stop risky behaviors like violence, substance misuse and disease. Many groups are working together to provide help for everyone.

Resource Guide

Cancer in Iowa:
99 Counties Project

www.iowacancerregistry.org/99



Environment-related Resources



Cancer Clusters

If you are concerned about cancer excess in your area, please email the Iowa Cancer Registry at ICR-CancerConcerns@uiowa.edu

Iowa Private Well Grants Program, Iowa HHS

Iowa's [Private Well Grants Program](#) (PWG) provides free water testing to all private well owners and users for the analytes listed.



Agricultural Health Study

The aim of this study is to understand how agricultural, lifestyle, and genetic factors affect the health of farming populations. Linked with Iowa Cancer Registry data to study risk of developing cancer among pesticide applicators. aghealth.nih.gov



Center for Health Effects of Environmental Contamination (CHEEC)

CHEEC supports and conducts research to identify, measure and study adverse health outcomes related to exposure to environmental toxins.

cheec.uiowa.edu



Environmental Exposures & Health Risks Fact Sheets

Environmental Health Sciences Research Center created fact sheets with information on cancer and non-cancer health risks for selected environmental exposures. <https://ehsrc.public-health.uiowa.edu/communityengagement/resources-information/>



Center for Energy & Environmental Education's (CEEE), Environmental Health Program

Raises awareness about the link between harmful chemicals and their impacts to both people and climate.

ceee.uni.edu



Other initiatives in Iowa



The Harkin Institute



Cancer and Environmental Risk Factors in Iowa

The Harkin Institute and the Iowa Environmental Council are exploring the relationship between environmental risk factors and cancer rates in Iowa.

<https://www.iaenvironment.org/our-work/cancer-and-environmental-risk-factors-in-iowa/>



Holden Comprehensive Cancer Center

Expert Panel

UI Holden Cancer Center is bringing renowned national and international cancer experts together to investigate Iowa's cancer rates.



Health and Human Services



College of Public Health

Cancer Drivers in Iowa

Governor Reynolds and the legislature passed Senate File 647, which created a collaborative project with Iowa Health and Human Services and the University of Iowa College of Public Health to examine the factors behind the rise in cancer rates in Iowa.

<https://iphprp.org/cancer-drivers-in-iowa/>

[Interim Findings Report](#)

Main Takeaways

Cancer is an important health issue facing your county.

There are proven ways to prevent cancer & find it early.
You can avoid risk factors and get screened.

Iowa has a strong Cancer Plan, resources, & organizations to help fight cancer.

Policy changes at the local and state levels can have a huge impact!
Please communicate your concerns & needs with your state representatives and local policymakers.

This is only the first step.



Thank you for attending!

If you would like to **share your thoughts** on this meeting, please participate in our brief survey. The QR code will direct you to the survey.

This brief survey should take no more than 5-10 minutes of your time.

