

# Arkansas Statewide Epidemiological Outcomes Workgroup

1/26/2026

Supported by: SAMHSA Substance Abuse  
Block Grant 1B08TI087025-01



# Presentation Roadmap



**Part 1. National Survey of Drug Use and Health (NSDUH)**

**Part 2. Arkansas Health Survey**

# NSDUH



- Status uncertain after 2024
- Likely to continue under the Administration for a Healthy America (AHA) with SAMHSA eliminated
  - Unclear how it will operate without statistical experts
- Contractor continued collecting 2025 data
- Uncertainty about planned survey changes & what direction will the survey take

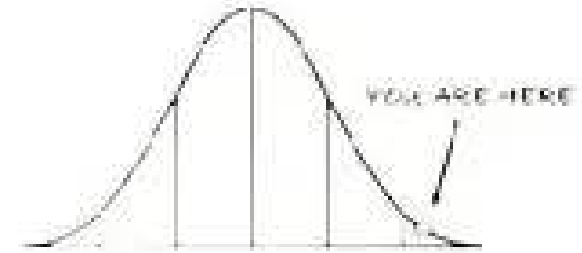
# 2024 NSDUH

- Nationally representative survey of:
  - Substance use
  - Mental health
  - Treatment and service use
- Comparing Arkansas vs. the United States
  - Across multiple substance use and mental health outcomes
  - Using standardized national methods



# Key Question: Is Arkansas different from U.S. Average?

- How This Is Determined
  - Statistical tests compare Arkansas to the U.S.
- Results are labeled as:
  - Statistically significant
  - Not statistically significant



**KEEP  
CALM  
AND  
BE  
SIGNIFICANT**

# What 'Statistically Significant' Means

- The difference is **unlikely to be due chance**
- Based on a standard threshold ( $p \leq 0.05$ )
- It does **not** mean:
  - The difference is large
  - The difference is harmful
  - Action is automatically needed



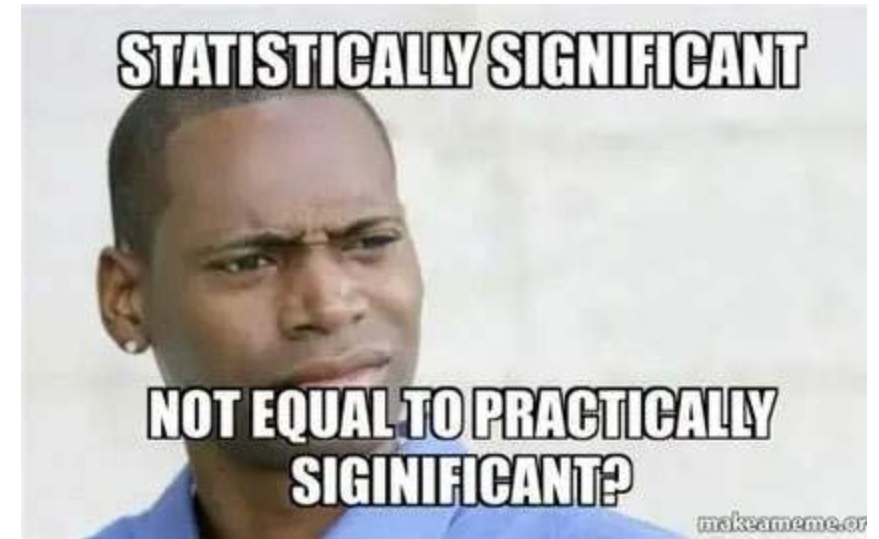
# What 'Not Statistically Significant' Means

- **Important Clarification:**

- It does **not** mean there is no difference
- It means:
  - The difference may be small
  - The data may be variable
  - Or the estimate is uncertain

- **These results still matter for:**

- Monitoring trends
- Contextual understanding
- Long-term planning






# Statistical Significance vs. Real-World Importance

- **Statistical Significance**
  - A math-based determination
  - Answers: *Is this difference likely real?*
- **Real-World Importance**
  - Does this affect many people?
  - Is the difference meaningful?
  - Could prevention or services help?

# How to Interpret the Graphs You'll See

- **When You See:**

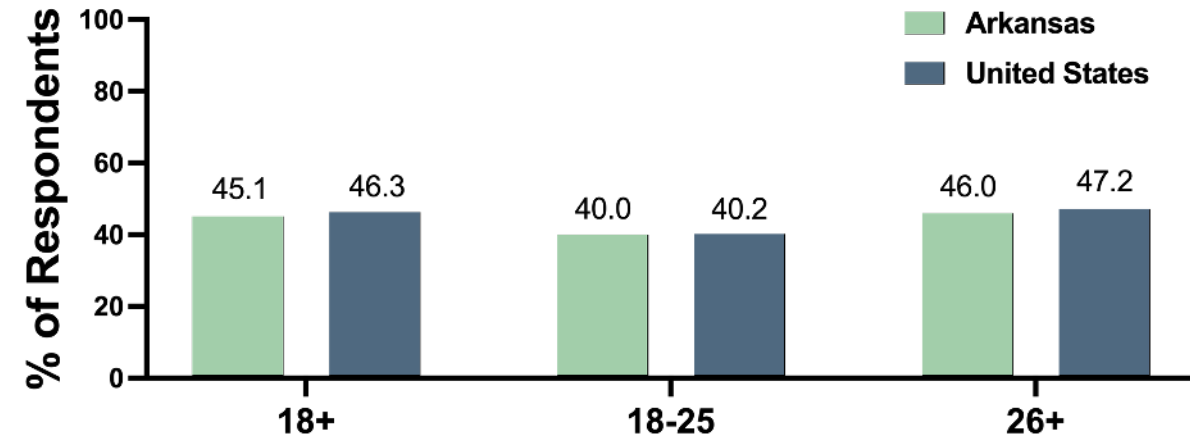
-  **Statistically significant** → likely a real difference
-  **Not significant** → difference is uncertain or small
-  **Close to significant** → worth monitoring over time

- **Key Message**

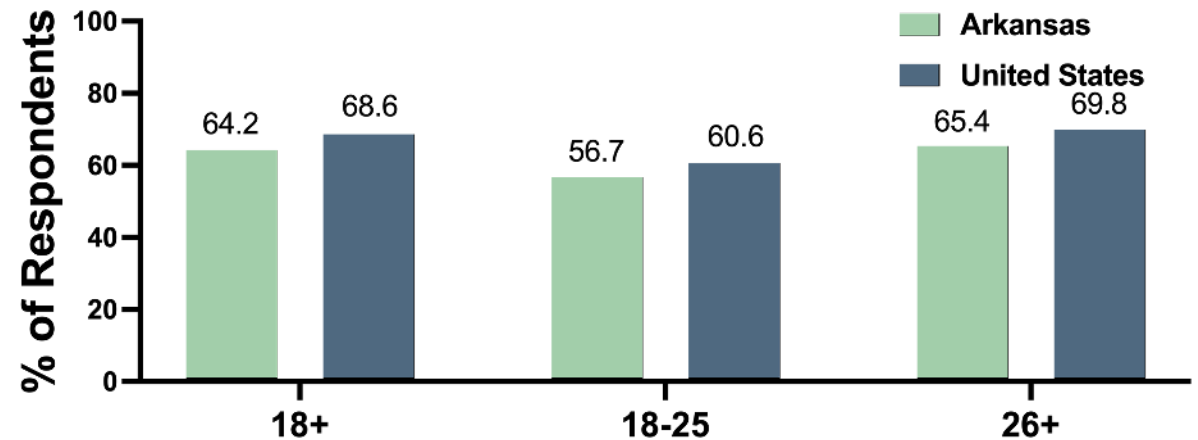
- These findings help guide awareness — not make decisions on their own.

# Perceived Great Risk

## Drinking 5+ Alcoholic Beverages Once or Twice per Week



## Smoking 1+ Packs per Day

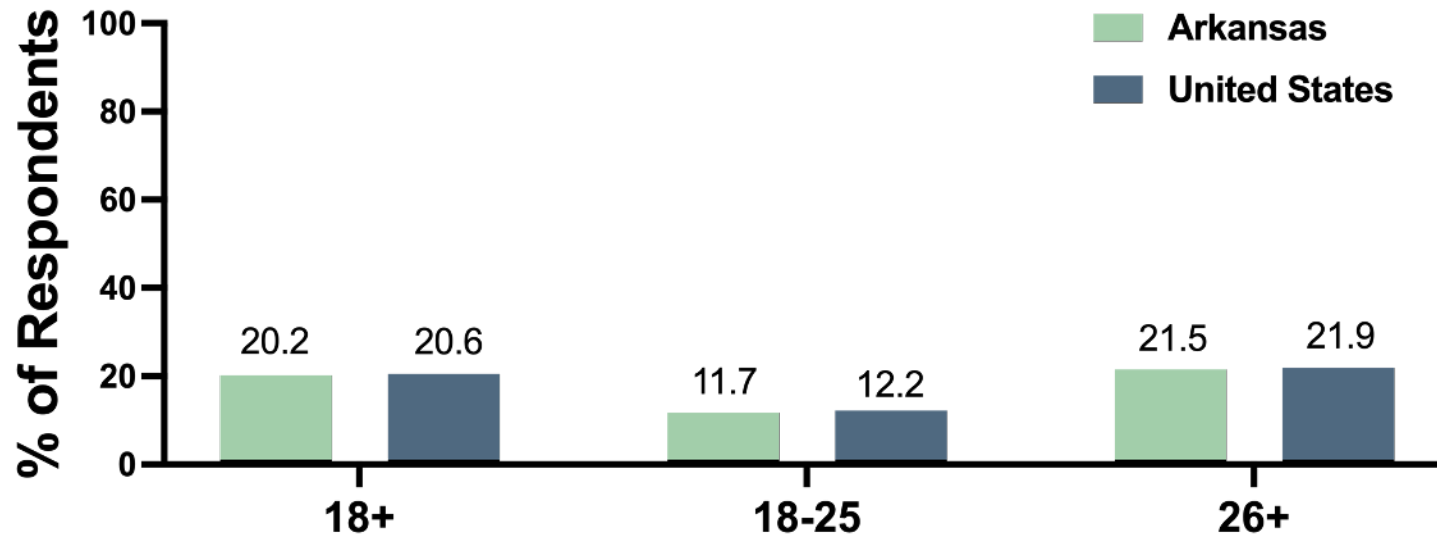


⚠ Not significant

✅ Significant differences for ages 12+, 18-25, 26+, and 18+

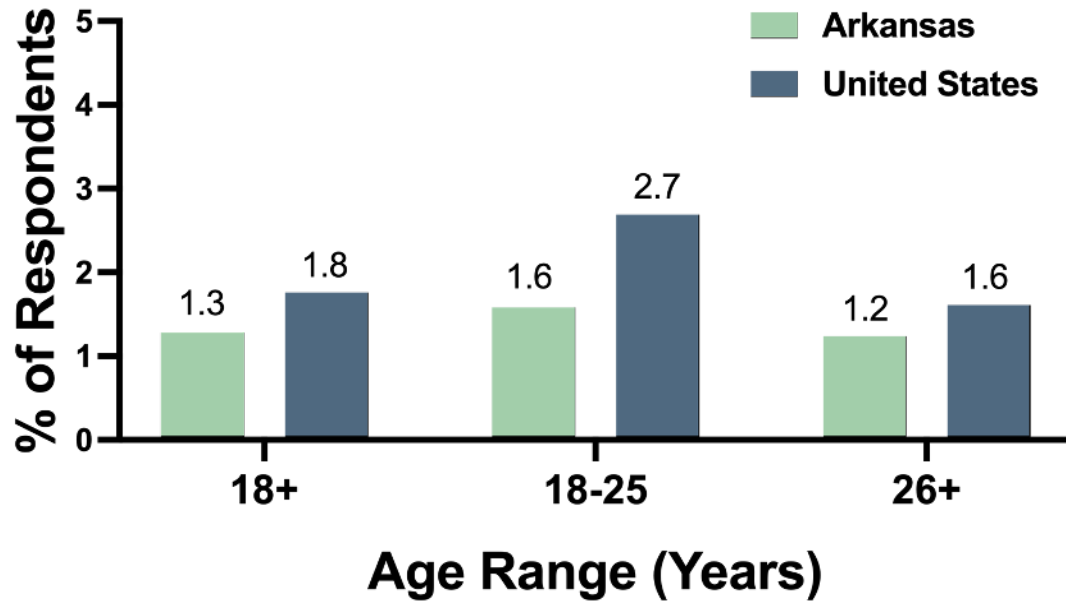
# Perceived Great Risk

## Smoking Marijuana Once or Twice per Month



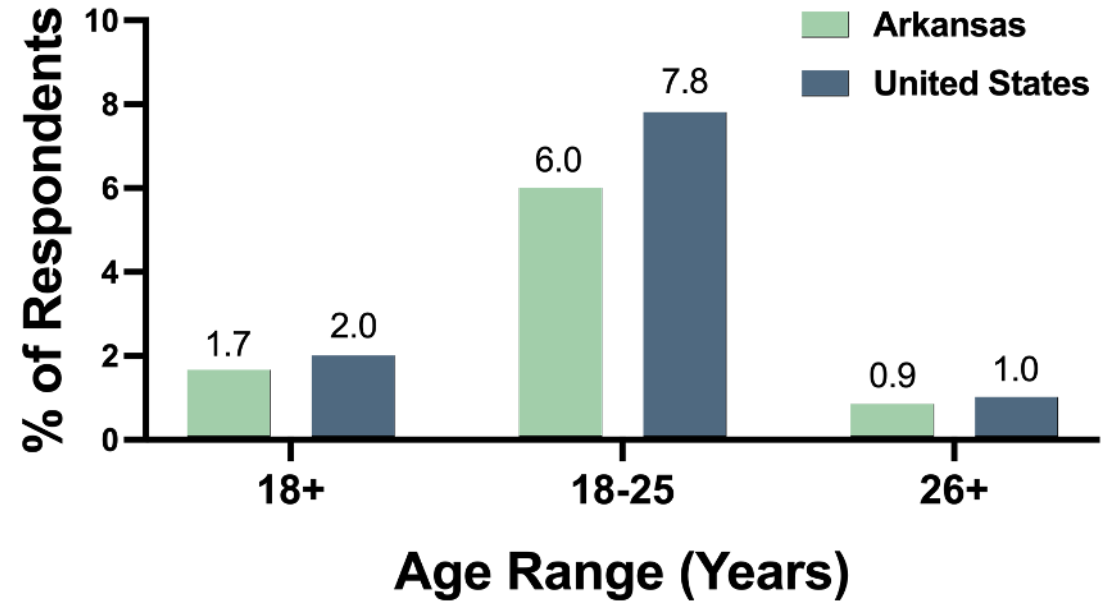
! Not significant

### Past-Year Cocaine Use, 2023-2024



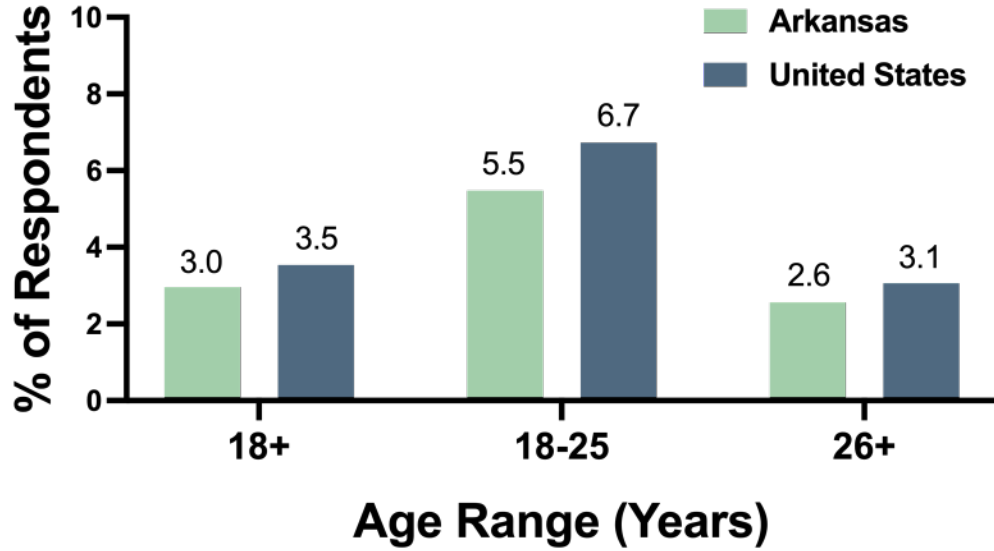
✓ Significant only for ages 18-25

### Past-Year First Time Marijuana Use, 2023-2024



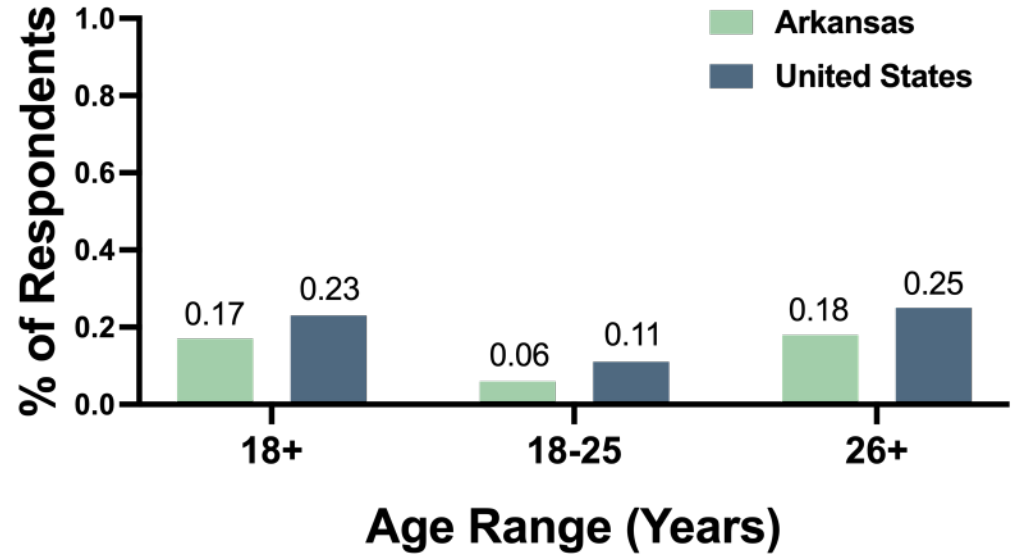
✓ Significant only for ages 18-25 and 18+

### Past-Year Hallucinogen Use, 2023-2024



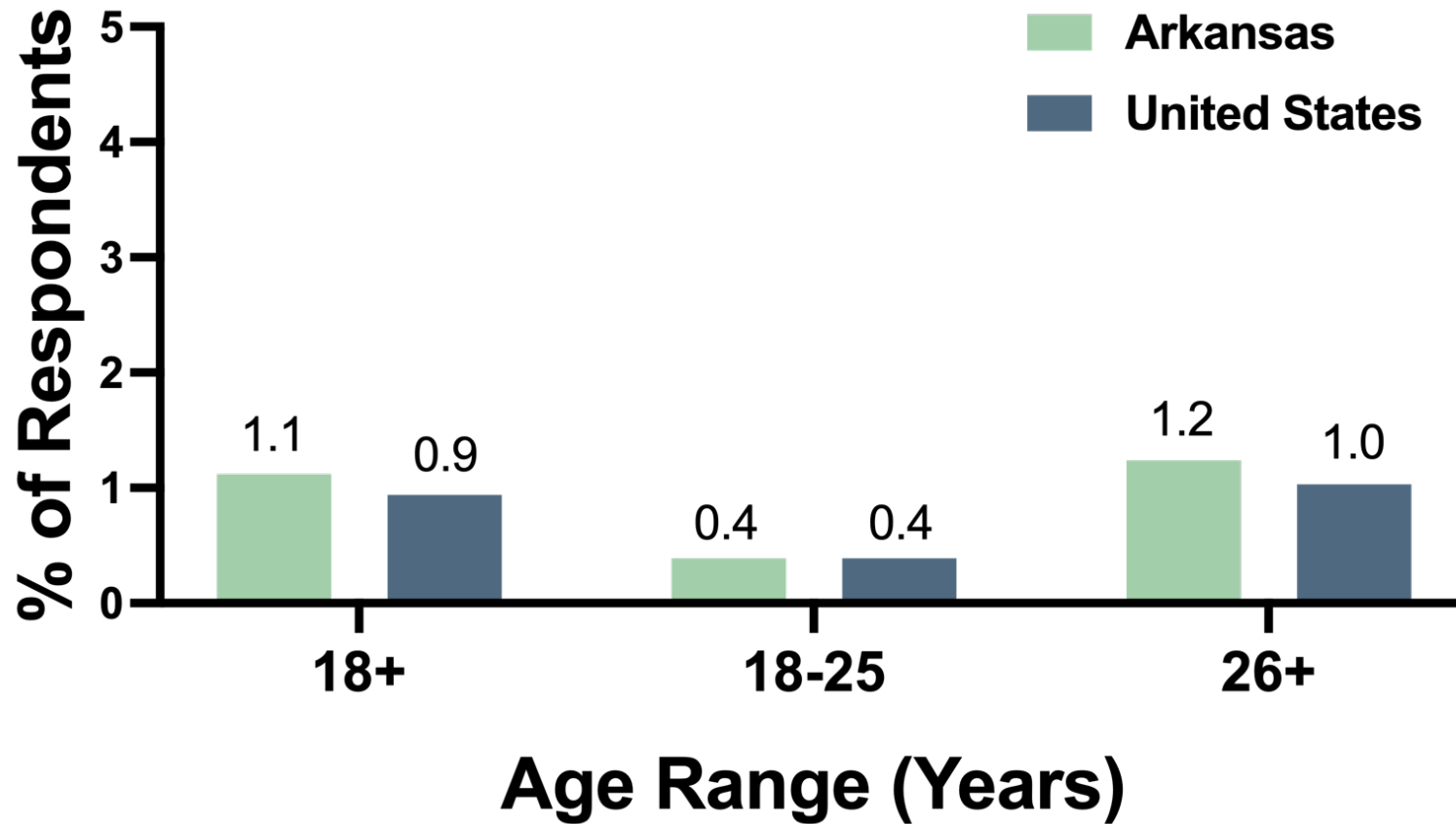
⚠ Not significant

### Past-Year Heroin Use, 2023-2024



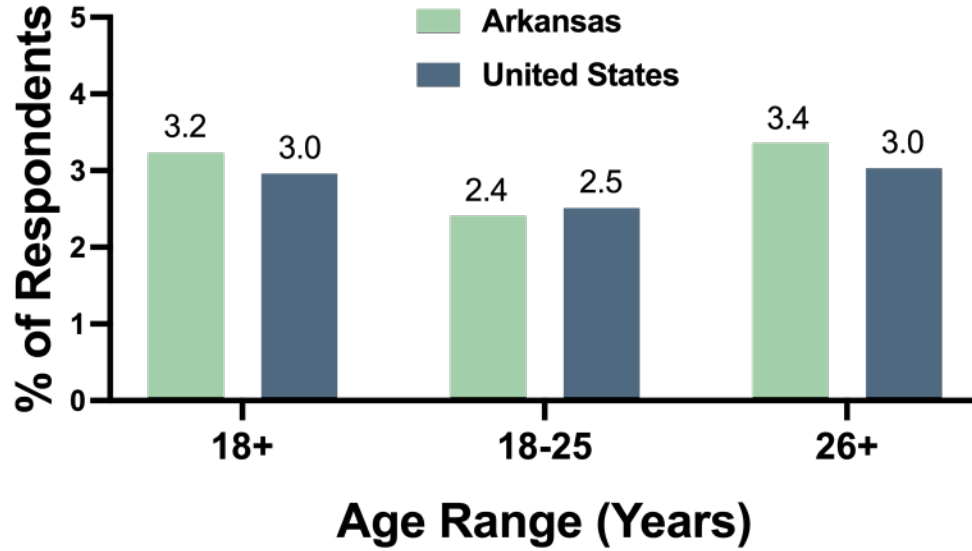
✅ Significant differences for ages 18-25 only

# Past-Year Methamphetamine Use, 2023-2024



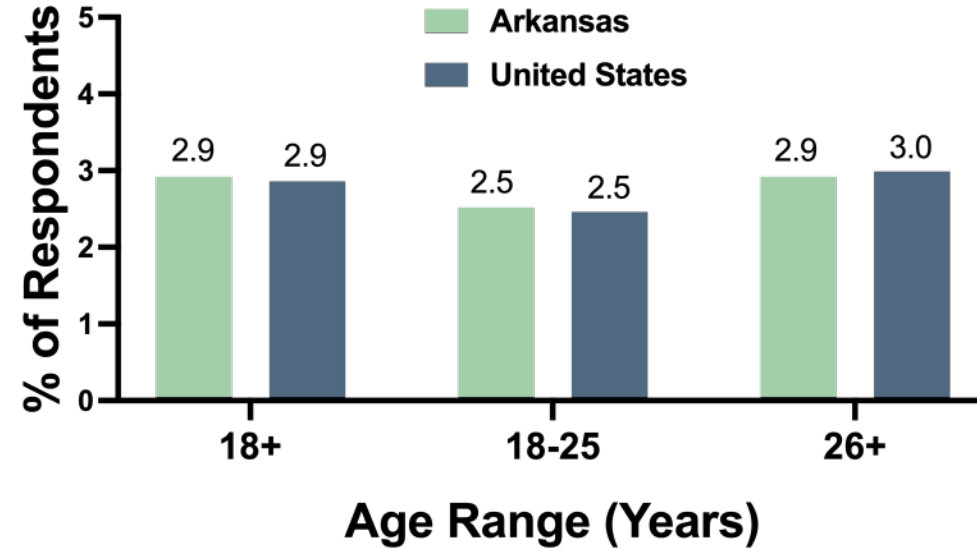
! Not significant

### Past-Year Opioid Use, 2023-2024



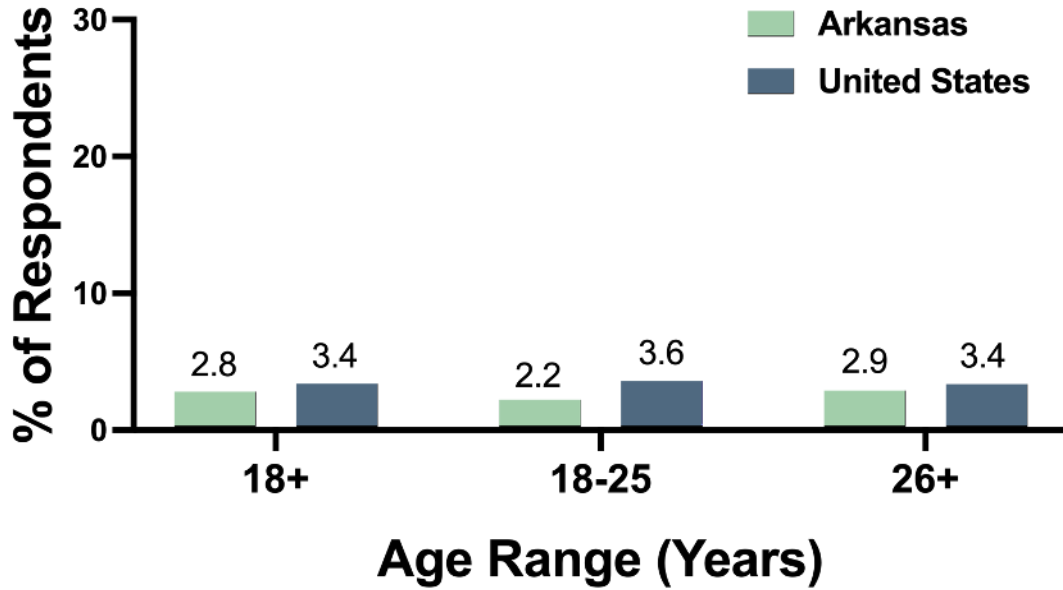
⚠ Not significant

### Past-Year Rx Pain Reliever Use, 2023-2024

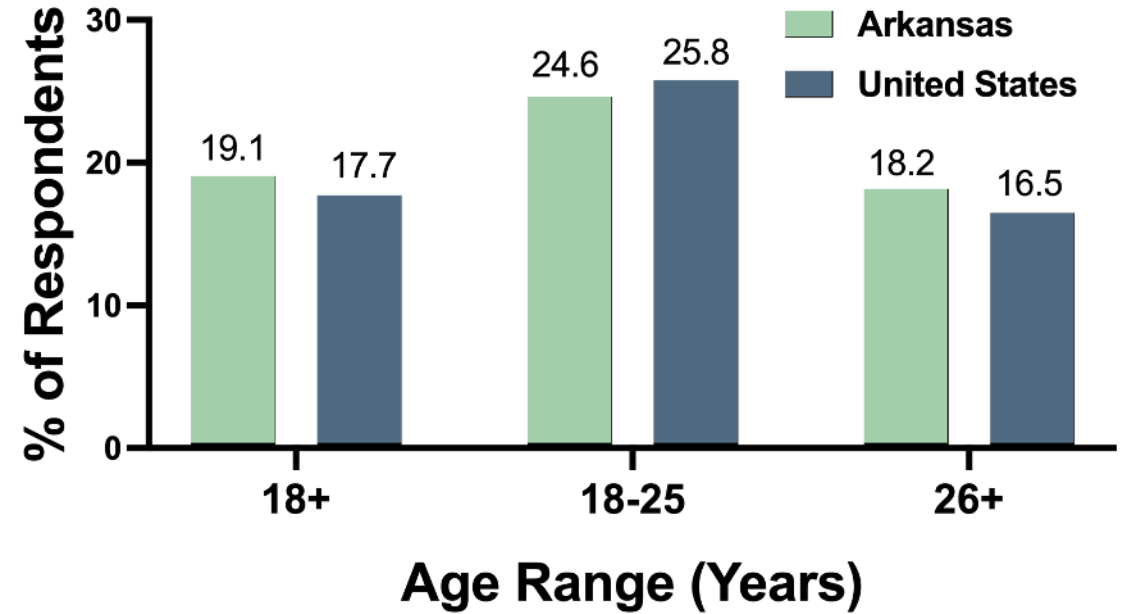


⚠ Not significant

### Past-Month Illicit Drug Use (Exc MJ), 2023-2024



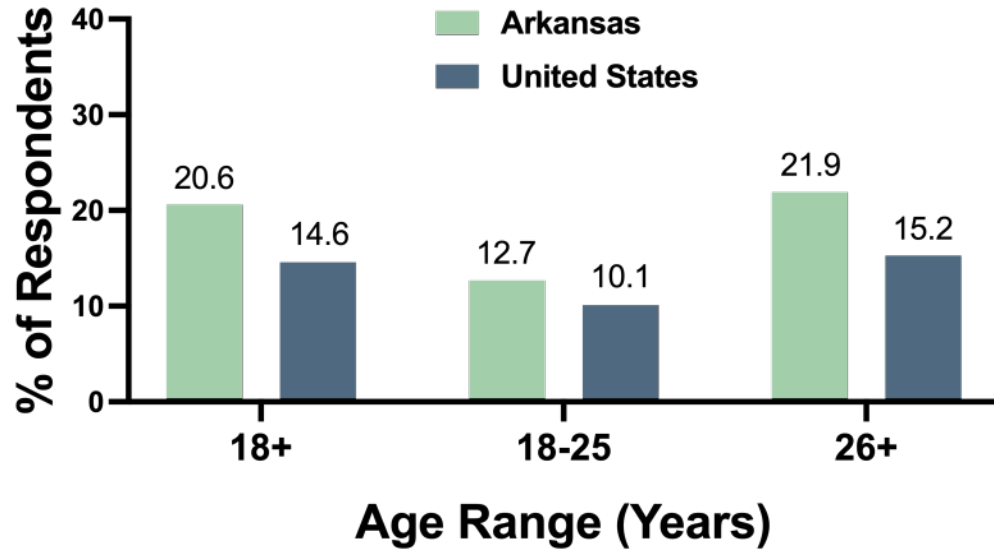
### Past-Month Illicit Drug Use (Incl MJ), 2023-2024



● Approaches significance for ages 18-25 ( $p=0.086$ )

⚠ Not significant

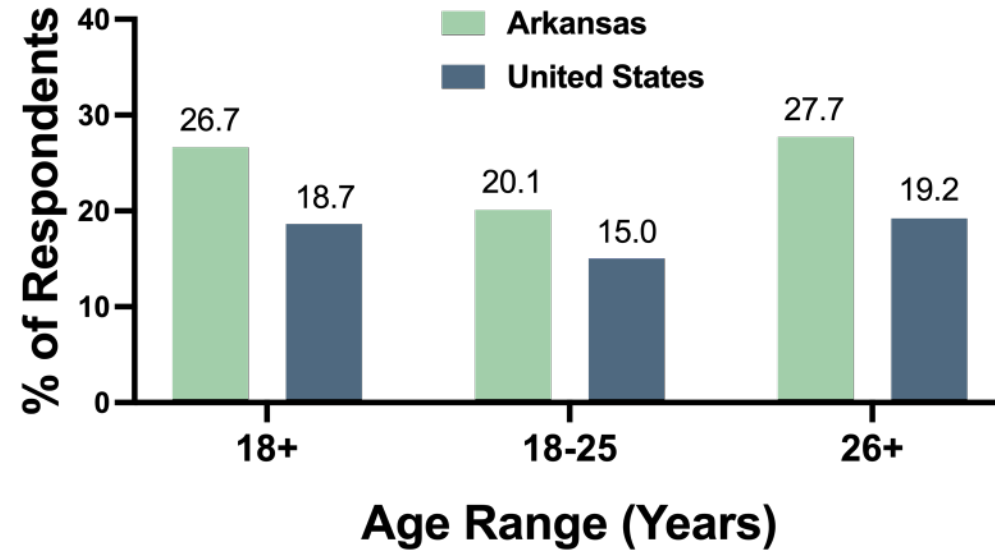
### Past-Month Cigarette Use, 2023-2024



✓ Significant for ages 12+, 18+, and 26+.

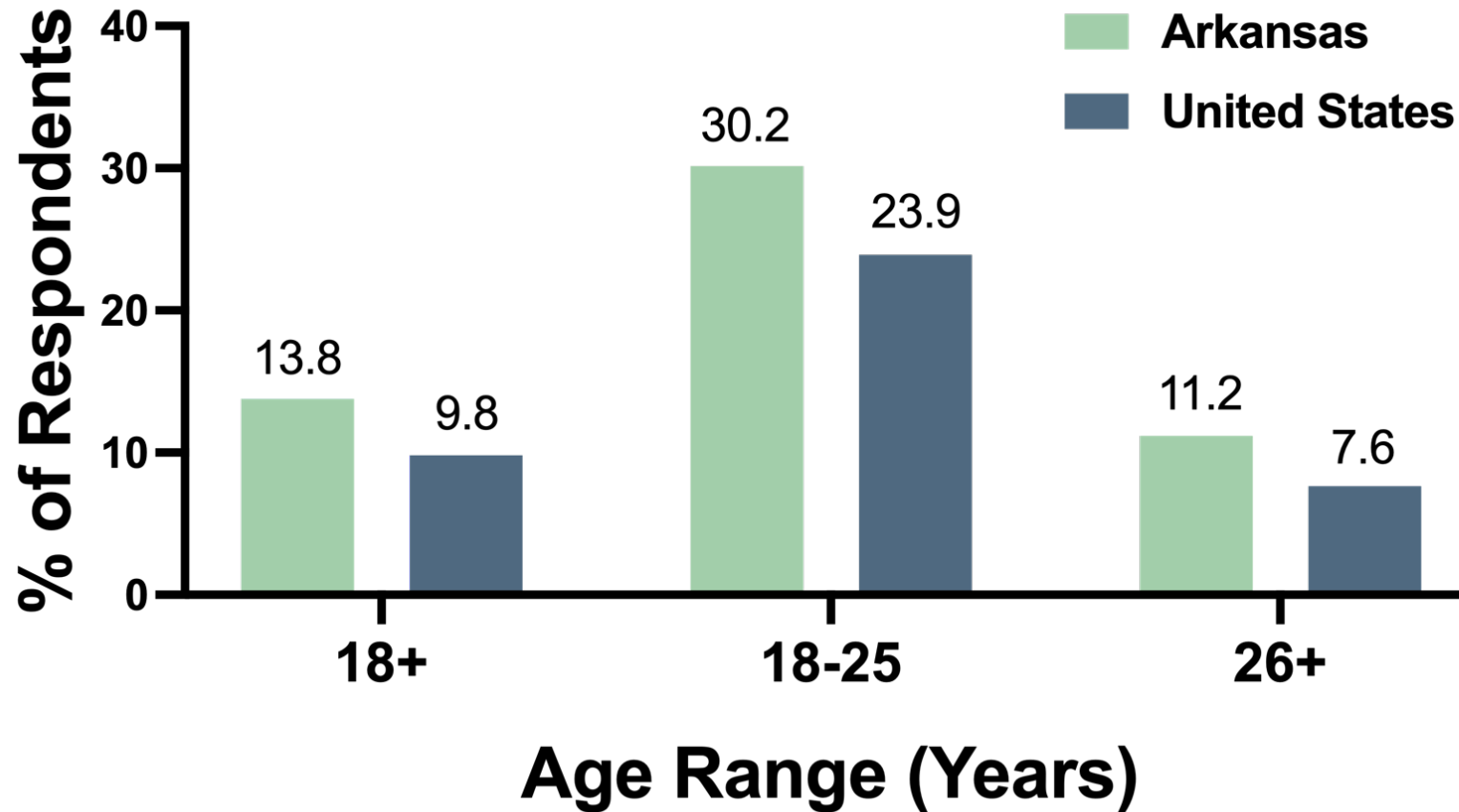
● Approaches significance for ages 18-25 (p=0.071)

### Past-Month Tobacco Product Use, 2023-2024



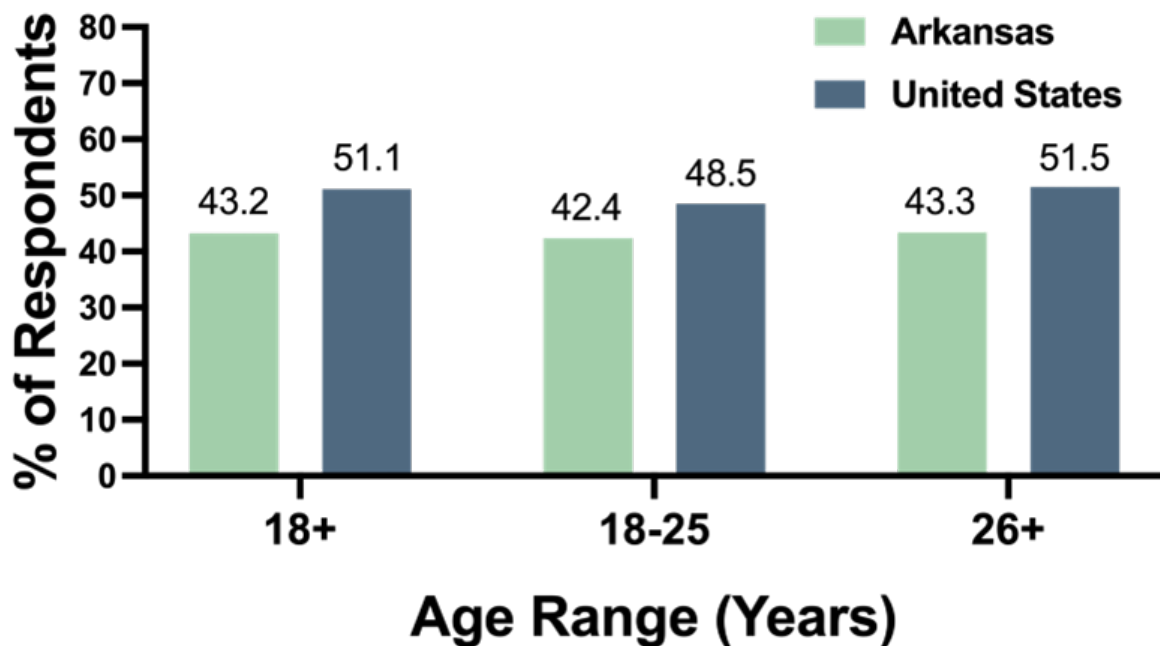
✓ Significant for ages 12+, 18+, and 26+.

# Past Month Nicotine Vaping, 2023-2024



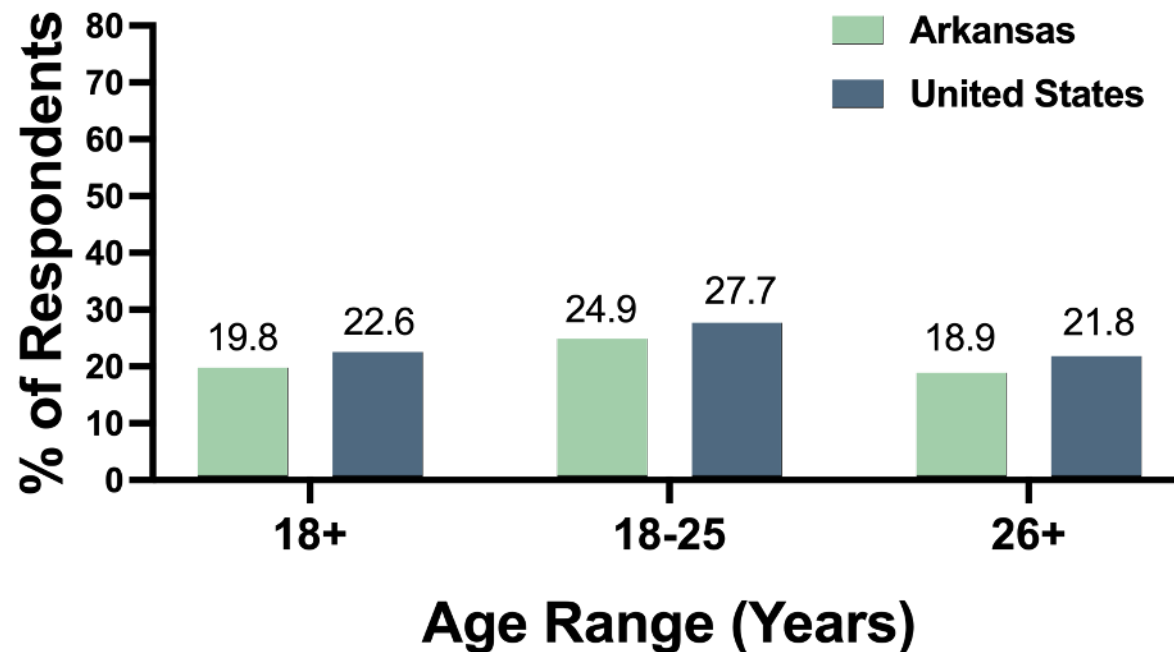
✔ Significant differences ages 12+, 18-25, 26+, and 18+

## Past-Month Alcohol Use, 2023-2024



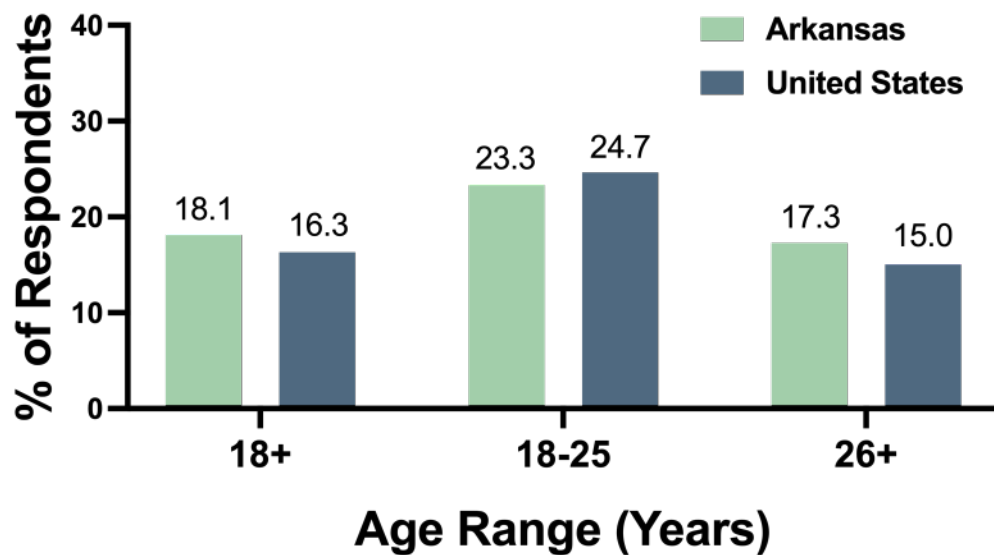
! Not significant

## Past-Month Binge Alcohol Use, 2023-2024



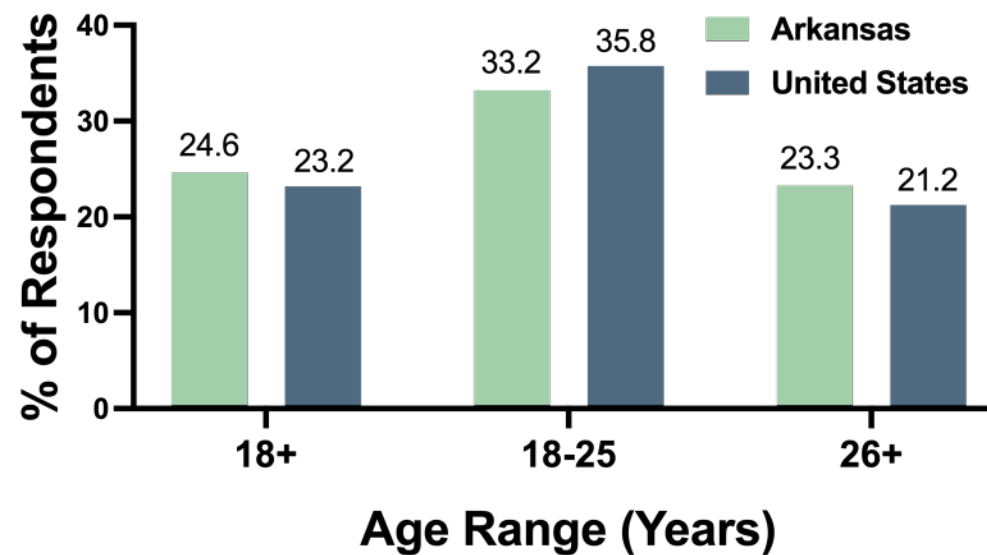
✓ Significant for ages 12+, 26+, and 18+ only

### Past-Month Marijuana Use, 2023-2024



! Not significant

### Past-Year Marijuana Use, 2023-2024



! Not significant

# Important Interpretation Note

- No statistical difference  $\neq$  no problem
- Arkansas may look similar to the U.S. because both are high
- Lack of difference does not mean no need for prevention or action
- National averages are not benchmarks for “acceptable” levels

# Key Takeaway

- Identify patterns
- Importance depends difference size & feasibility of action
- Data informs prevention and planning

# Part II. Arkansas Health Survey



# What This Survey Adds

- State-specific data focused on Arkansas residents
- Complements national NSDUH findings
- Helps identify *where* and *how* needs appear locally
- Designed to inform planning and resource allocation

# About the Arkansas Health Survey

- Conducted by multiple Arkansas institutions
- Adults age 18 and older
- Online and mail survey
- ~70,000 invited; ~10,000 responses
- Purpose:
  - Identify health-related needs
  - Monitor access to care
  - Support planning and evaluation

# Key Findings from the Arkansas Health Survey

- **29%** reported food insecurity
- **22%** had trouble paying medical bills
- **56%** worried about paying for care if sick
- **10%** lacked reliable transportation
- **19%** sought mental health care
- **32%** reported loneliness
- **36%** experienced 3+ extreme weather events

# How to Interpret These Results

- NSDUH results shown here represent a limited subset of available data
  - Findings should be viewed as illustrative, not comprehensive
- Arkansas Health Survey data are still being finalized
  - Full interpretation will require:
    - Complete survey release
    - Review of question wording
    - Understanding of sampling and weighting

# What This Presentation Does — and Does Not — Do

- This presentation does:
  - Demonstrate how state and national data can be interpreted
  - Show how statistical significance should be understood
  - Highlight areas that may warrant closer attention
- This presentation does NOT:
  - Represent a full analysis of NSDUH data
  - Draw conclusions about cause or impact
  - Characterize the full Arkansas Health Survey results