

II. INTRODUCTION

Mission Statement:

The Coffee County Health Council is to act as an independent advisory organization whose purpose is to facilitate the availability and affordability of quality health care within the South Central Tennessee Public Health Region.

Definition of Community Diagnosis:

A simple definition used by the North Carolina State Center for Health and Environmental Statistics of a community diagnosis is “a means of examining aggregate health and social statistics, liberally spiced with knowledge of the local situation in order to determine the health needs of the community.” By using this definition, we acknowledge that significant input from residents of the local area is essential to performing a community diagnosis effectively. Although a great deal of quantified health data can be obtained from the State, the process will only be successful if local citizens are fully involved and are comfortable with the eventual findings. This is why the formation and effective utilization of county health councils are vital in achieving accurate results.

History/Summary:

Around the beginning of the 19th Century, the first pioneers started settling in the area around Garrison Fork of the Duck River in what is now Coffee County. Manchester was chosen as the county seat because it was closer to the geographic center of the county.

Community members formed the council on February 28, 1997. The initiating meeting was held at the Brass Rail Restaurant and was hosted and facilitated by the South Central Region’s Community Development staff.

Those present at the initiating meeting were given an overview of the Community Diagnosis process. The group was informed of the intent of the Department of Health to improve their assessment and planning by giving residents an opportunity to assess health problems at the local level. Everyone present was given the opportunity to become a member of the Coffee County Health Council by indicating their interest on a questionnaire provided by the Community Development staff. They were also encouraged to nominate any community member who might be interested in serving on such a council. The Council agreed to have the meeting place alternate between Manchester and Tullahoma on the third Wednesday of each month.

The first meeting was scheduled for March 19, 1997 at the Oak Restaurant in Manchester. In June, the Council elected Dr. James Lindsay, M.D. to serve as Chairman. A survey was distributed throughout the community, and the regional Community Development staff tabulated the results. The survey was designed to