

XI. COMMUNITY DIAGNOSIS NEEDS ASSESSMENT

It is important that the identification of health problems be built upon a picture of the community. This description of the county provides a view of what sets the community apart and makes it different from or similar to the state, counties of like size, and/or surrounding areas. It follows, then, that the health status of the community can be determined largely through the use of quantified data, observational data, and user input.

In defining Hamilton County's health status, the Regional Health Council sought to use two types of data: primary and secondary data.

A. PRIMARY DATA

Primary data has been used to provide descriptions of people's behavior, their experiences, and their personal perceptions about health issues, including health problems, social issues and other events of life that impact well-being. Findings from a review of this data are included in Section XI which begins on page 9.

The primary data sources used for this assessment are:

1. Adult Behavioral Risk Factor Survey, 1995

In Fall 1995, the Community Health Task Force, organized by the Metropolitan Council for Community Services, conducted a community survey of the adult population in Hamilton County, using the Adult Behavior Risk Factor Survey, an instrument developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Adults in 816 households were surveyed in Hamilton County. The sample size provided 95 percent reliability with a margin of error of + or - 3 percent.

2. Youth Behavioral Risk Factor Survey, 1998

In Spring, 1998, the Community Health Task Force conducted a survey of 2,990 ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth-grade students representing all public high schools in Hamilton County. The Youth Risk Behavior Survey instrument was also developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This instrument provided for anonymous self-reported responses. The sample size represented approximately 25 percent of Hamilton County's public high school student population. Here, the sample size was sufficient to provide a margin of error of + or - 3 percent.