

## INTRODUCTION

This document is the result of a county-wide health needs assessment, known as the Community Diagnosis Process, conducted by the Sequatchie County Health Council (SCHC) and facilitated by the Tennessee Department of Health Assessment and Planning Program. Begun in 1998, the Community Diagnosis Process has enabled SCHC members to:

- Analyze the health status of the community
- Evaluate health resources, services and systems of care within the community
- Assess attitudes toward community health services and issues
- Identify priorities
- Establish a baseline for measuring improvement over time

Meeting monthly, the SCHC has given careful consideration to county-specific primary data and secondary data. The collection of primary data consisted of a Community Assessment survey, a Behavioral Risk Factor Survey, and observational information from SCHC members. The Community Assessment Survey (see yellow pages) is an opinion-based, non-scientific survey asking key members of the community how they feel about certain local health services. The Behavioral Risk Factor Survey (see green pages) is a scientific survey that asks respondents about their lifestyles, in an attempt to identify any activities that may be a risk to their health. It is a random sample of approximately 200 Sequatchie County residents and is to be representative of the entire county. SCHC members supplemented the two survey instruments with their own observations of situations, events, interactions, observed behaviors, prevailing community attitudes, and practices.

To compliment the primary data, the SCHC analyzed a wealth of secondary data (see blue pages). The county-specific data includes birth, morbidity and mortality statistics and basic demographic information. Most of the data was presented showing multiple year rates, dating back to 1985, so that the council was able to look for trends in the data. The SCHC was able to compare county-specific statistics with regional and state rates and “Year 2000 Objectives” to determine whether Sequatchie County is following or deviating from the trend of the surrounding counties or the trend of the state as a whole and whether the county is progressing toward national objectives.

After several data dissemination sessions, the SCHC prioritized the health issues highlighted in the assessment. A formula, scoring the size of the problem, seriousness of the problem, and effectiveness of available interventions, was applied to each health issue. Cognizant of the assessment results, each member applied his or her own score to the problem and a sum total of all council members’ scores determined the order of priority. The council then decided how many of the priority health issues they felt they could effectively address in full consideration of the following:

- Does it make economic sense to address the problem?