

## **MORBIDITY & MORTALITY**

The Wayne County Health Council was presented with statistics concerning reportable diseases and causes of death within the county. The Health Council also reviewed the number of teen pregnancies that had occurred in Wayne County over a ten-year time frame. The Community Development staff provided comparisons of similar data with other counties in the region and across the state to enable the Health Council to recognize significant problems in their own community.

In addition to specific health problems, the council was provided a comprehensive view of the status of children and youth within Wayne County.

### **Five Leading Causes of Death:**

The Wayne County Health Council members were provided with county specific data from 1997 concerning the leading causes of death. The list is as follows:

1. Diseases of the Heart
2. Malignant Neoplasms
3. Cerebrovascular Disease
4. Accidents and Adverse Effects  
    Motor Vehicle Accidents
5. Pneumonia and Influenza

These are consistent with the leading causes of death across the state of Tennessee, as well as the United States.

### **Teen Pregnancy**

Wayne County's teen pregnancy rate for 1997 (6.7) was lower than the State's rate (20.2) as well as the regional rate (14.7) for females ages 10-17. Tennessee's teen pregnancy rate continues to decline. The rate decreased 3% from 1992 to 1994. The problem of teen pregnancy is compounded by misconceptions. A prevalent one is that it is an adolescent problem when in fact it is an adult problem since 74% of the men involved in the pregnancies among women under 18 were not teens; 35% are aged 18-19, and 39% are at least 20, according to the 1995 Guttmacher study on *Sex and America's Teenagers*. Teens are more likely than older women to have babies whose health is compromised at birth due to inadequate prenatal care. Low birth weight is more common to infants of teens than among babies born to women in their 20s. Teenagers who become parents are disadvantaged socially, economically and educationally.