

II. Community Diagnosis Defined

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.

The final outcome of community diagnosis and its products should:

- **Provide justification for budget improvement requests submitted to the State Legislature;**
- **Provide to state-level programs and their regional office personnel information that fosters better planning, promotion, and coordination of prevention and intervention strategies at the local level;**
- **Serve health planning and advocacy needs at the community level. Here, the community leaders and local health departments provide the leadership to ensure that documented community health problems are addressed.**

The end result of the process will be a set of prioritized health goals and proposed interventions to address the needs of the community. The Tennessee Department of Health is committed to assisting communities throughout our state in finding the answers to these questions via the Community Diagnosis process. This document will explain the community diagnosis process and outcomes for White County. We will also provide a historical perspective with details of the council and its formation.