

physical fighting than students in the remaining grades. Forty-one percent of 9th graders reported this practice, compared to 31% of 10th and 11th graders and 23% of 12th graders. This grade effect is explained in part by school leaving or dropping out, which alone decreases the percentages of high risk behaviors among older students.

- Among Tennessee respondents, 3% reported that in the past 12 months they were injured in a physical fight and had to be treated by a doctor or nurse. More than twice as many males (5%) as females (2%) were so injured in 1997.<sup>21</sup>

Source: YRBSS, Tennessee, 1997, TDE.

### **Suicide**

- The suicide rate for Tennessee youth, defined as the 15-19 year-old population, increased by 3% from 1990-1992 to 1994-1996. For 1994-1996, the rate was 10.2 per 100,000 population. This compares with the national target rate set for the Year 2000 Healthy People Objectives of 8.2 per 100,000. Between 1990-1992 and 1994-1996, the suicide rate for youths residing in nonmetropolitan areas rose by 31%, whereas it fell 22% for their metropolitan counterparts.
- The age-adjusted suicide rate for the Tennessee population was 12.3 per 100,000 in 1990-1992 and 12.1 in 1994-1996. This compares with the National Year 2000 target rate of 10.5 per 100,000. With a trend towards widening differentials, rates for whites of either sex exceeded those for blacks. In 1994-1996, rates for white males were 48% higher than those for black males. Rates for white females, however, were only 3% higher than corresponding rates for black females.
- The suicide rate for white Tennessee males ages 65 years and older declined 12% between 1990-1992 and 1994-1996. Nevertheless, the 1994-1996 rate of 44.9 was 13% higher than the Year 2000 national target rate for elderly white males of 39.2 per 100,000.

### **Suicide Risk Among High School Students**

- According to data from the Tennessee YRBSS for 1997, 22% of high school students surveyed reported that they had considered attempting suicide in the past 12 months. More females (27%) than males (16%) reported considering suicide. Percentages declined by grade level from a high of 24% of 9th graders to 22% of 10th graders, 21% of 11th graders and 19% of students in 12th grade.

---

<sup>21</sup>YRBSS, Tennessee Department of Education, 1997.