



# **CHCHD News**

**Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Department**

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## **Health Department Releases 2010 Community Health Data Profile**

Chattanooga, TN – A new report published by the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Department and Regional Health Council finds that while progress has been made in the health of Hamilton County residents, there is still room for improvement.

The 2010 community health data profile, called "*Picture of Our Health, Hamilton County, Tennessee*" is a report published every four years to present a comprehensive look at Hamilton County's health that can be compared to state and national trends. The report also contains priority areas identified by the Council who will work with community partners to address these areas.

"This report is a helpful tool to evaluate the health of our community, and to guide our efforts in targeting prevention initiatives, improving the delivery of health care, and influencing public policy," said Howard Roddy, Chair of the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Health Council.

The *Picture of Our Health* includes data on the population in Hamilton County, demographics, general health status, mortality, maternal and child health, chronic diseases, and environmental health. The new report has been expanded to include injury and violence, mental health, alcohol use, and infectious diseases. The last report was published in 2006.

Key findings of progress in the health of Hamilton County include:

- Overall life expectancy has increased, from 76 years in 1999 to 77.2 years in 2007.
- Cigarette smoking among adults in Hamilton County has decreased 16% since 1999.
- Alcohol binge drinking among adults in Hamilton County had decreased to 8.5% in 2007, surpassing the *Healthy People 2010* objective of 13.4%.
- Teen pregnancy has decreased 15% from 2000 to 2007 in Hamilton County.
- Motor vehicle crash deaths have decreased 19% from 1999 to 2007.
- "Immunizations complete" for children under the age of two have increased, from 85.1% in 2004 to 87.6% in 2008, surpassing the statewide coverage level of 82.3%.

"I want to celebrate our community's progress towards the prevention of disease and premature death," said Becky Barnes, Administrator at the Health Department. "We also know that trends reflect changes over a period of time, so our prevention efforts must be ongoing. We want to encourage our residents to continue to adopt healthy behaviors and lifestyles. We are also dedicated to the long-term work needed to address the health challenges of our community."

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Areas identified in the report for improvement include:

- Infant mortality rates increased 23% from 7.9 per 1,000 births in 2000 to 9.7, in 2007. The African American infant mortality rate in Hamilton County is 1.5 times higher than whites.
- Overweight and obesity among adults increased 48% from 1999 to 2007. Almost 2 out of every 3 (61%) adults in Hamilton County are either overweight or obese.
- Diabetes prevalence among adults increased 42% from 1999 to 2007.
- Sexually transmitted diseases, including syphilis, gonorrhea, and Chlamydia increased 33% from 2000 to 2008.
- Health insurance among adults decreased 4% from 1999 to 2007.
- Overall racial health disparities: African Americans in Hamilton County have higher rates of death from heart disease, cancer, diabetes, and stroke than their white peers.

“Despite these challenges, Hamilton County is positioned with a strong and active Regional Health Council working to prioritize health needs, make recommendations, and develop partnerships to address our community’s health needs,” said Mr. Roddy.

To address these challenges, the Regional Health Council identified the following 2010-2013 strategic priority areas:

- Addictions and Dependency
- Health Care Reform
- Infant mortality
- Obesity, Diet, and the Lack of Exercise
- Preventive Health Services
- School Health
- Tobacco

The Council has developed specific recommendations and actions for each priority area, and will be working to develop partnerships and collaborative efforts for addressing these recommendations over the next three years.

The Regional Health Council is the lead community-based organization designated by the Tennessee Department of Health to be responsible for community health assessments, regional health planning, and the provision of input regarding funding decisions for health and health-related initiatives. The Council partnered with the Health Department to prepare the report and provide recommendations for action. The 2010 *Picture of Our Health* report is available online at <http://rhc.hamiltontn.org/>.

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