

## *INTRODUCTION*

The Health Status Survey Overview Report provides information on 39 health measures from the 1996 Health Status Survey, plus a variety of Utah demographic characteristics from the survey and elsewhere. The 39 health measures represent most of the topical areas covered in the 1996 survey.

This report is intended to provide a brief overview of each of the measures. For the purposes of the report, the measures have been simplified such that only one level of each measure is reported. For instance, each respondent's general health status was originally reported on a five-point scale (excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor). The simplified measure has only two levels, Utahns whose health was excellent, very good, or good, and those whose health was fair or poor. Only one level, those with fair or poor health, is reported.

For each measure, an attempt was made to report information in a meaningful manner. For instance, for the variable "time since last pap smear" the reported category indicates the percentage of women who had not received a pap smear in the past two years. This level was used because the current clinical guidelines recommend that women should have pap smears every two years unless more frequent screening is medically indicated.

It is also common for a measure to be reported for only a sub-population of Utahns. For instance, cholesterol testing was reported only for persons age 35 or over because clinical guidelines for testing do not exist for persons under age 35. Cigarette smoking was reported only for persons age 18 and over because there were doubts about the validity of the measure for persons age 17 and under. (An adult household member reported this information and many children hide this behavior from adult household members.) The relevant sub-population is always referenced in the title of the figure or table.

Each measure is depicted in the highlights section by a bar chart. The figure typically displays the information by sex and age group.

Reference tables for the measures typically report an overall percentage for the entire relevant Utah population, and for that population by sex, age group, and age group by sex. When the sample size allowed for it, the measures are also presented by local health district. Additional comparisons for each measure may be found in that measure's detailed health status survey report, or by requesting it through the Bureau of Surveillance and Analysis at the address listed inside the front cover of this report.

The information in the tables and figures is presented for different sex, age, and geographic groups. By presenting the information this way, it is not meant to imply that differences in a measure are caused by a person's sex, age, area of residence, or any other variable in the survey. Data that are collected in a one-point-in-time survey will never provide sufficient evidence of a cause and effect relationship between two variables. For instance, a relationship between obesity and overall ill health has been observed. The data do not suggest whether being obese causes ill health, being ill causes one to be obese, or whether some third variable, such as a chronic condition, causes a person to be obese and to experience overall ill health.

It should be noted that this report is an overview of the Health Status Survey results, and not a complete overview of the health status of Utahns. There is other relevant information that should be taken

into account in order to gain perspective on Utahns' overall health status, such as leading causes of death, trends in hospitalization for various conditions, infectious disease rates, low birthweight, motor vehicle accidents, and many other factors. Some of this information can be found in other Bureau of Surveillance and Analysis publications, such as *Leading Causes of Death in Utah by Sex and Age*, and *Utah's Healthy People 2000 Health Status Indicators*. In addition, the Behavioral Risk Factors Surveillance System is a source for additional survey information on Utahns' health behaviors.