

# Executive Summary

The Sonoma County Department of Health Services is pleased to present the *Sonoma County Health Profile*, a public health data resource for our county. Monitoring the health of our community is one of the core functions of public health. The *Sonoma County Health Profile* provides a review of health-related data, over the period of approximately 2000 To 2003. Where possible, we compare local data to state and national figures, as well as to the Healthy People 2010 objectives. The goal of this report is to provide health data that can be used by local government and community agencies, health care providers, and other interested community members and groups, to help identify and better address the health needs of Sonoma County.

The *Sonoma County Health Profile* identifies many important areas where Sonoma County meets national health objectives or has improved over the last several years. Some examples are:

- ◆ The Sonoma County age-adjusted death rate for heart disease has decreased significantly since 1999 and is significantly lower than the California rate.
- ◆ Sonoma County has met the Healthy People 2010 objectives in the areas of early access to prenatal care, low birth weight infants, pre-term births and infant mortality rates.
- ◆ The number of tuberculosis cases continues to decrease in Sonoma County, although there has been an increase in tuberculosis cases with antibiotic resistance.

This report also includes several health indicators where there are significant disparities among age, economic, gender, racial or ethnic groups within our community. There are also areas where national health objectives have not yet been met, or local outcomes compare unfavorably with state rates. Some examples include:

- ◆ The Sonoma County age-adjusted death rate for cancer is higher than the California rate. While the local breast cancer rate is similar to that of California, the lung cancer rate in Sonoma County is significantly higher.
- ◆ The Sonoma County age-adjusted unintentional injury hospitalization rate is significantly higher than the California rate.
- ◆ Sonoma County had the fifth highest county rate of childhood anemia in California in 2003.



Additionally, certain concerning national health trends are occurring locally. For example, Sonoma County is experiencing a major increase in the number of adults who are overweight. Between 1997 and 2001, the percentage of Sonoma County adults who were overweight or obese increased from 28% to 48%. Overweight and obese individuals are at increased risk for many chronic diseases and health conditions, including diabetes, hypertension, heart disease and certain cancers. The problem of overweight is occurring at increasingly younger ages. Locally, 33% of low-income children age 2 to 4, and 40% of children age 5 to 19, are overweight or at risk of becoming overweight.

The *Sonoma County Health Profile* is the fourth comprehensive public health data resource developed by the Sonoma County Department of Health Services. Previous publications included Health Profiles 1994, 1996 and 2000. We are currently developing a largely web-based program that will provide data that can be updated on a more frequent basis, making timely data more available for you. As part of this process, we would appreciate your comments as to which elements of data in this report or future reports would be most useful for you and your organization. A brief online survey is available for your feedback at:

[www.sonoma-county.org/healthprofile/](http://www.sonoma-county.org/healthprofile/)

Through this and other efforts, we seek to work collaboratively with our local community to continue to improve the health of all people in Sonoma County. It is our hope that the *Sonoma County Health Profile* will be an important step in this process, by identifying local successes in health indicators, as well as signaling challenges in health status that we need to address as a community.

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