

SIERRA COUNTY COMMUNITY HEALTH PROFILE 2005

Updated April 2005



Community United for Quality Living / Unidos Para Salud

In collaboration with the members of the Sierra County
Services Coalition and Sierra County Maternal Child Health
With Support from Community Action Agency of Southern
New Mexico Funded by New Mexico Department of Health

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INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS THE HEALTH COUNCIL

The **Community United for Quality Living Health Council** became a comprehensive community health council, in the fall of 2004, as collaboration between community members from the Sierra County Services Coalition the Sierra County Maternal Child Health Council and the Sierra Community Council. This blending of coordination efforts, in the form of a Health Council, has given each of these independent groups an opportunity to learn about and address state-wide initiatives such the Behavioral Health Purchasing Collaborative and to have a voice at the state level. The **Community United for Quality Living Health Council** provides a forum to discuss health issues such as obesity, substance abuse, transportation, environmental health and community resiliency and to create strategic planning groups to address these issues.

The mission of the Community United for Quality Living Health Council is:

To contribute to the quality of living by promoting the health and wellness of all people in Sierra County regardless of age, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disabilities or religious beliefs.

The purpose of the **Community United for Quality Living Health Council** is to provide a forum for organizations, agencies and individuals who are concerned about the quality of living in Sierra County, to learn about and to discuss health issues that affect the community and to develop action teams to focus on these issues.

The motto: **UNIDOS PARA SALUD** – “United towards health or well-being” is the primary vision of the **Community United for Quality Living Health Council**.

Officers for 2005-2006 are:

Terri Smith	Chair
Donna Sanchez	Co-chair
Val TwoWolves	Scribe

The following list shows organizations, agencies and individuals who are active and/or supporting members of the **Community United for Quality Health Council**:

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| ➤ Jennie Bustamonte | Senior Joint Organization on Aging |
| ➤ Rebecca Dow | AppleTree Education Center Director |
| ➤ Wendy Sanger Evanson | Studio de La Luz Yoga Center / Movement Therapy |
| ➤ Sharon Finarelli | T or C Housing Authority Support Officer |
| ➤ Jane Greene | Sierra Community Council / 4 th St. Computer Lab |
| ➤ Nola Kent | DWI Coordinator |
| ➤ Louise Long | Sierra Vista Counseling Center Director |
| ➤ Ruth McPherson | Concerned Citizen |
| ➤ Anita Peterson | Youth One Stop Shop SWREC |
| ➤ Russ Peterson | Truth or Consequences Chief of Police |

WHAT IS THE HEALTH COUNCIL (cont')

➤ Majie Powey	Public Health Nurse
➤ Lois Reaver-Black	City Commissioner / Mayor Pro Tem
➤ Carol Renninger	Ben Archer Social Worker / Counselor
➤ Kelly Ridings	Geronimo Trails High School
➤ Rube Salazar	Department of Labor
➤ Donna Sanchez	Health Promotion Specialist, NM Dept of Health
➤ Yolanda Sepulveda	Income Support Department
➤ Elaine Skidmore	Full Gospel Tabernacle
➤ Terry Slay	Children Youth and Families Division
➤ Ruth Slayton	Sierra Vista Clinic Director
➤ Terri Smith	Maternal Child Health
➤ Juliette Sullivan	Sierra Health Care Center
➤ Val Two Wolves	Social Worker Supervisor, NM Veterans Home
➤ Kit Teilkor	Public Health Nurse
➤ Terrie Vanskike	Sierra Vista Hospital
➤ Scott Weaver	Children's House Director
➤ Bobbi West	Registered Nurse / SV Hospital / AppleTree
➤ Heather Rische	Licensed Midwife

Participants in the process of data collection and assessment were members of Community United for Quality Living Health Council, specifically Donna Sanchez, Health Promotion Specialist / New Mexico Department of Health, District III, Jennie Bustamonte, Administrator, Sierra Joint Office on Aging, Terri Smith, MCH Coordinator and Aspen ni Wood, Coordinator for Community United for Quality Living Health Council, Wendy Sager Evanson, LMT, Maria Piñeda, DOH Immunization Coalition, Lorraine Keele, Sierra Community Council, Noe Lara, CYFD and District III Epidemiologist, Lisa Roth-Edwards and Jan Quick, Department of Health Prevention Specialist.

Definition of health as defined by members of Community United for Quality Living Health Council:

The highest quality of life that can be experienced mentally, physically and spiritually, in all aspects of living, that creates freedom from disease and illness.

STATISTICAL PROFILE

DEFINITION OF COMMUNITY

Geographic Definition

Sierra County is located at the northern tip of the Chihuahuan Desert in southern New Mexico and borders on Doña Ana, Luna, Grant, Catron, Socorro, Lincoln and Otero Counties. The county is bisected by the Rio Grande River and by Interstate 25, the primary route used for travel to the nearest major cities, Albuquerque (149 miles), Las Cruces (75 miles) and El Paso (119 miles).

According to a 2003 estimate on the 2000 Census, population in Sierra County is approximately 13,125 and encompasses 4,180 square miles. Sierra County has a population density of 3.2 per person per square mile and is classified as a frontier community.* The majority of people live in three incorporated municipalities that are adjacent to each other:

Incorporated Municipalities in Sierra County by Population Number

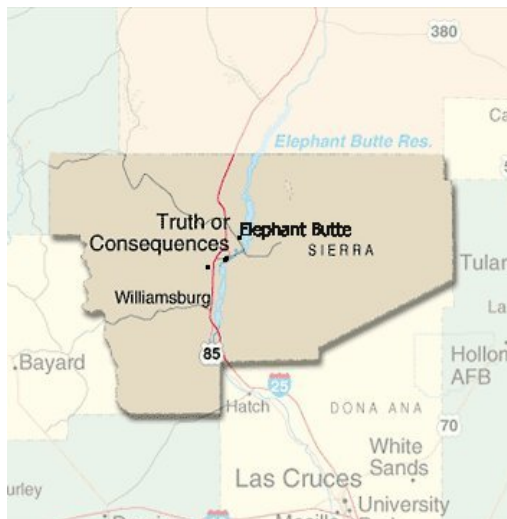
<u>The City of Truth or Consequences (The County Seat)</u>	7,289
<u>The Village of Williamsburg</u>	527
<u>The City of Elephant Butte</u>	1,390

Source: U.S. Census, 2000

* Frontier is commonly defined as counties with a population density of six or fewer people per square mile, but like rural, there is no official definition of what “frontier” means. The definition is based on other factors such as travel distance in miles and time to the nearest medical facility. Frontier is automatically considered rural.

Source: Frontier Education Center

The remaining 3,919 people live in (or near) one of the rural communities located in the unincorporated area of the county and often must travel a significant distance to reach any health services.



Miles to County Seat

Sierra County Communities	# in Miles
Arrey/ Derry	22
Animas Creek	13
Caballo	16
Chloride	40
Cuchillo	15
Engle	17
Hillsboro	32
Kingston	41
Monticello	21
Palomas	8
Winston	38

Source: U.S. Census, 2000

Geographic Definition (cont')

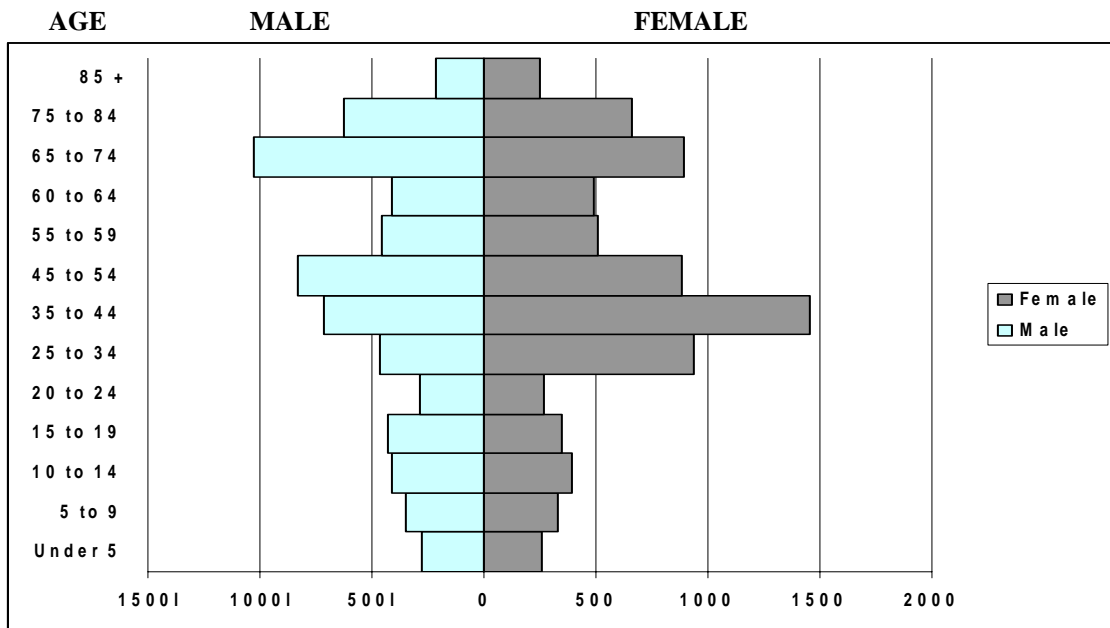
Sierra County is home to three State Parks, a portion of the Gila Wilderness and Elephant Butte Lake, the largest body of water in New Mexico. Hot mineral water from an underground aquifer has given rise to a Historic Bath House District in downtown Truth or Consequences where five historic bathhouses are open to the public for taking a soak in the hot bathes, or getting a massage. In the Sierra County Community Needs Assessment conducted in 1999, people cited the hot springs along with fishing, very clean air, and a relaxed, small-town feeling, as the reasons why they live here.

Population Definition

Population by Age and Gender:

Figure #1 shows Sierra County's population split by age group and gender. This is a good reference for organizations that plan age-oriented events.

FIGURE #1: 2002 Population Estimates by Age and Gender For Sierra County



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

Population Definition (cont')

Population by Age and Race/Ethnicity

Table #1 shows the number of the Sierra County population broken down by age, race and ethnicity and the percentage total of how each is represented in the County. Note that 28% of Sierra County's population consider themselves Hispanic or Latino.

**TABLE #1: Population Estimates and Percentage
By Age and Race/Ethnicity
For Sierra County, 2002**

Age Groups	ONE RACE				Two or More Races	Total Population	Hispanic or Latino Ethnicity * Any Race
	White	Black	American Indian / Alaska Native	Asian / Pacific Islander			
Under 5 years	514	9	5	2	7	537	231
5 to 9 years	641	11	16	0	7	675	341
10 to 14 years	758	12	18	2	8	798	379
15 to 19 years	753	4	16	0	6	779	338
20 to 24 years	542	1	10	0	1	554	221
25 to 29 years	422	3	12	2	1	440	207
30 to 34 years	468	6	15	2	2	493	211
35 to 39 years	597	2	18	3	3	623	246
40 to 44 years	798	7	24	1	5	835	279
45 to 49 years	843	1	20	2	8	874	197
50 to 54 years	806	1	21	2	7	837	152
55 to 59 years	932	3	19	1	9	964	166
60 to 64 years	887	1	8	3	3	902	150
65 to 69 years	953	6	6	2	3	970	161
70 to 74 years	936	2	7	1	5	951	137
75 to 79 years	747	1	4	2	1	755	102
80 to 84 years	525	1	2	0	1	529	60
85 and Over	467	1	2	0	2	472	55
All Ages	12,589	72	223	25	79	12,988	3,633
% of Total	97%	0.55%	1.71%	0.19%	0.6%		28%
* Hispanic or Latino origin may be of any race. Adding the Hispanic or Latino population to the racial categories will result in double counting.							

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

Population Definition (cont')

Income / Poverty

Table #2 shows how Sierra County resident's total personal income compares to New Mexico's total personal income from 1997 to 2002. Sierra County has dropped .05% in total personal income compared to New Mexico since 1997.

**TABLE #2: Total Personal Income (TPI) 1997-2002
for Sierra County and New Mexico (in thousands of dollars)
Showing Sierra County % of Total State Income**

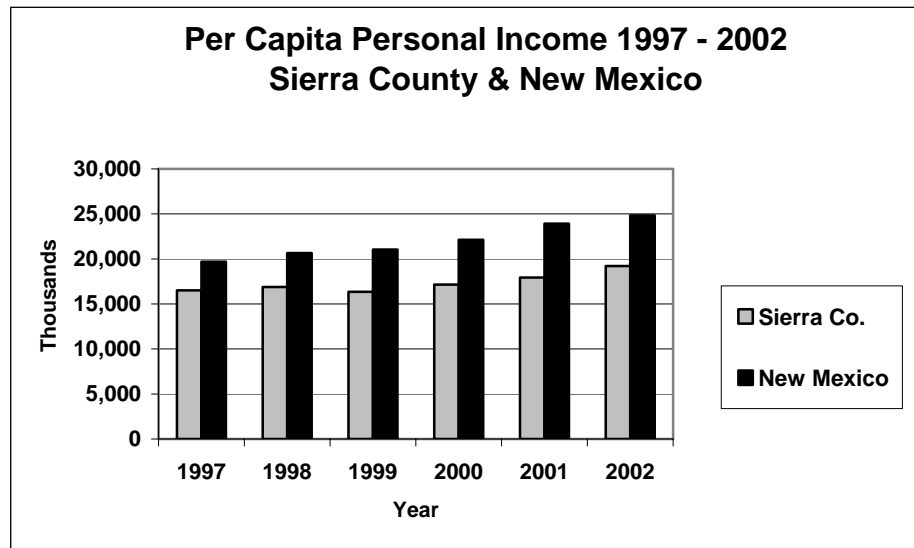
	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Sierra County	206,613	216,357	214,283	227,431	235,770	249,435
New Mexico	34,960,814	37,045,765	38,045,599	40,318,443	43,766,634	45,974,027
Sierra County % of Total NM Income	0.59%	0.58%	0.56%	0.56%	0.54%	0.54%

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2004

TOTAL PERSONAL INCOME (TPI) **Table #2** includes earnings (wages and salaries, other labor income, proprietors' income), dividends, interest, and rent, and transfer payments received by the residents of the county.

PER CAPITA PERSONAL INCOME: **Figure #2** shows Sierra County individual personal income received from all sources. This income may include the sum of wages and salary disbursements, supplements to wages and salaries, rental income, personal dividend income and interest income. This measure of income is calculated as the personal income of the Sierra County residents divided by the Sierra County resident population. Note here that individual personal income in Sierra County has been slowly rising since 2000.

FIGURE #2

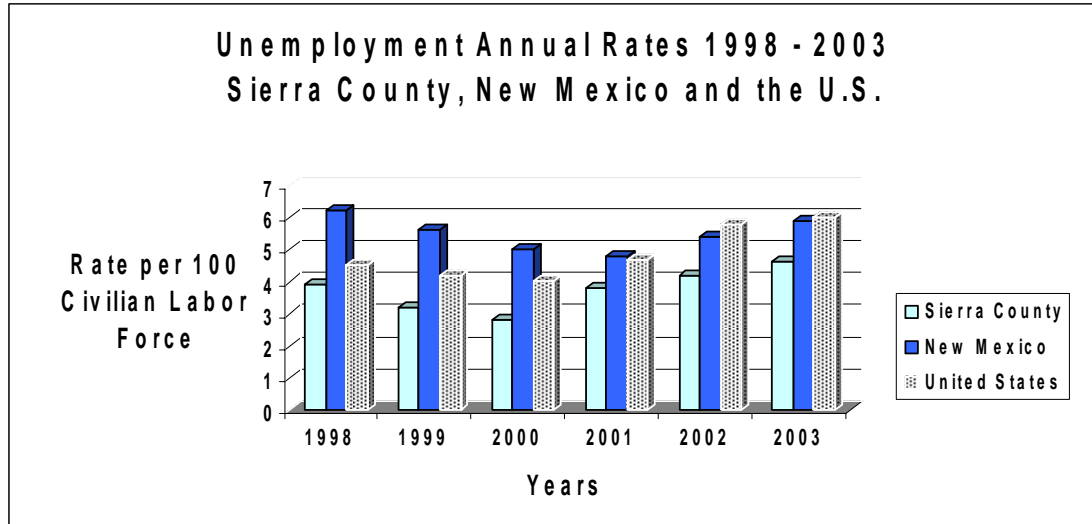


Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2004

Population Definition (cont')

The **unemployment Rate** is the number of persons unemployed as a percent of the civilian work force. **Figure #3** shows annual unemployment rates in comparison to the state of New Mexico and to the United States as a whole. Note that unemployment rates everywhere have steadily increased since 2001. However, both Sierra County and New Mexico continue to show a lower rate of unemployment than the United States as a whole.

FIGURE #3



	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Sierra County	3.9	3.2	2.8	3.8	4.2	4.6
New Mexico	6.2	5.6	5	4.8	5.4	5.9
United States	4.5	4.2	4	4.7	5.8	6

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2004

POVERTY: According to the National Center for Educational Statistics, People can be reduced to poverty if their way of life is threatened, or if they do not have enough land, money or other resources to enjoy a reasonable standard of life. One can be said to be living in poverty if one lives in a household whose income (adjusted for household size) is less than 40 percent the country's median household income. (NCES Website, 1999)

Population Definition (cont')

Poverty (cont')

Table #3 shows an estimated number of people living in poverty in Sierra County and New Mexico for the year 2002. The percent is against the total population of that specific age group in Sierra County and in New Mexico. Since 1999 the percent of people of all ages living in poverty in Sierra County has risen 4.9% while the poverty level statewide has dropped 0.5%. (2004 Sierra County Community Health Profile, 2004). **Table #4** shows the number of people in Sierra County who are enrolled in Medicaid, including the Medicaid enrollees who are under 21.

TABLE #3: Estimated Number and Percent of People Living in Poverty in Sierra County, 2002

Age	Sierra Co		New Mexico	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
All ages in Poverty	3,259	25.3	327,444	17.7
Children age < 18 yrs	880	35.5	126,361	25.2
Related Children 5-17 years old	647	34.9	82,281	23.1

Source: U.S. Census, Small Area Income & Poverty Estimates, 2003

TABLE #4: Number of Medicaid Enrollees for Sierra County and New Mexico, 2002 - 2004

	2002		2003		2004	
	Sierra Co	NM	Sierra Co	NM	Sierra Co	NM
Medicaid	2,740	98,360	2,971	106,693	2,822	110,975
Medicaid (children < 21)	1,538	65,123	1,668	68,921	1,522	69,900

Source: New Mexico Human Services, Medical Assistance Division, 2004

Seniors in Poverty

Table #5 on Page 11 shows the total number of householders in Sierra County that are 65 years and older and how many of that total live below the poverty level, who have no transportation and who have no telephone. The Senior Joint Office on Aging provides transportation for many of these seniors.

Population Definition (cont')

Poverty (cont')

**TABLE #5: Householder 65 Years and Older
Living in Poverty
Sierra County, 2000**

	Number	Percent
Total Householders 65 years and Older	2,614	100
65 and Older living below poverty	435	16.6
No vehicle available	307	11.7
No telephone service	91	3.5

Source: U.S. Census, American Factfinder, 2003

Education

Table #6 shows enrollment numbers in Sierra County and New Mexico for the past three school years. Note that Sierra County currently has 144 less students enrolled than in the 2002-03 school year. This table can be useful for agencies planning grade defined activities. **Table #6** shows the number of students being home schooled in the last seven years.

**TABLE #6 Public & Private School Enrollment K - 12th Grade
Sierra County & New Mexico 2002-2005**

Grade	Sierra County			New Mexico		
	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Pre-K	36	44	45	3,381	3,641	5,322
Kindergarten	118	92	116	22,638	23,636	24,624
1st Grade	111	123	90	23,706	24,165	24,670
2nd Grade	138	96	120	23,550	23,518	24,021
3rd Grade	123	127	92	24,012	23,769	23,597
4th Grade	127	120	116	24,995	24,769	23,880
5th Grade	135	129	128	25,310	25,258	24,679
6th Grade	136	134	126	25,702	25,428	25,239
7th Grade	148	140	126	25,425	26,050	25,657
8th Grade	135	158	128	25,630	25,865	26,211
9th Grade	142	122	157	28,861	29,850	30,131
10th Grade	116	148	122	25,863	25,636	26,379
11th Grade	111	88	119	22,041	22,084	22,157
12th Grade	111	116	89	19,002	19,508	19,516
Private School						
All grades	31	36	24	24,487	31,369	N/A
Total	1,718	1,673	1574	245,455	354,159	326,083

Source: New Mexico Public Education Department, 2005

Population Definition (cont')

Education (cont')

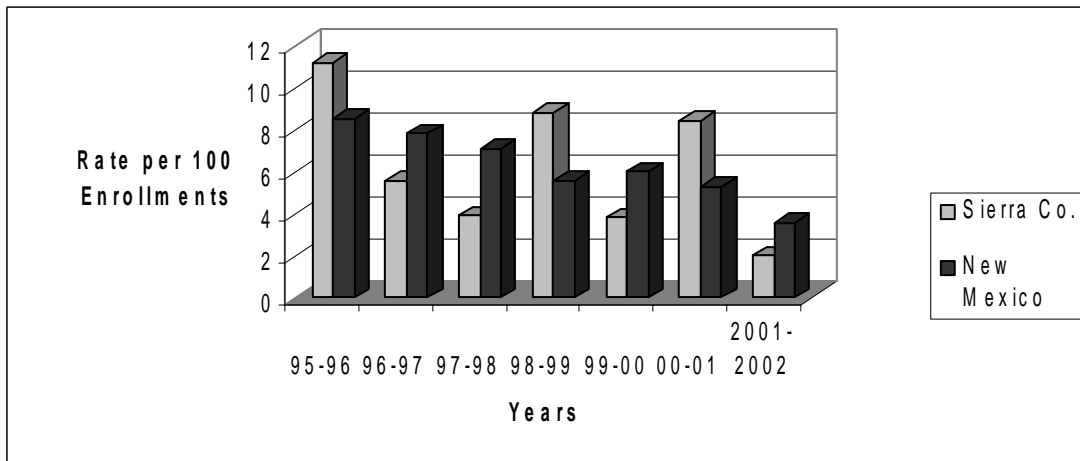
**TABLE #7: Home School Enrollment
Sierra County and New Mexico 1998 – 2004**

School	Sierra	New
Year	County	Mexico
1998	57	6,642
1999	38	6,083
2000	45	6,732
2001	31	5,858
2002	49	6,487
2003	25	5,669
2004	30	6,243

Source: N.M. Public Education Department, 2005

Figure #4 shows a steady decline of the high school drop out rate for both Sierra County and New Mexico. In 2001 the addition of the Geronimo Trails Alternative High School gave potential drop out students a more individualized, less structured educational format, keeping these students in school and graduating.

**FIGURE #4: High School Drop Out Rates for Grades 9-12
Sierra County and New Mexico
1995 - 2002**



	95-96	96-97	97-98	98-99	99-00	00-01	01-02
Sierra Co.	11.2	5.6	3.9	8.8	3.8	8.4	2
New Mexico	8.5	7.8	7.1	5.6	6	5.3	3.6

Source: New Mexico Department of Education, 2004

Population Definition (cont')

Language

TABLE #8: Language Spoken at Home in Numbers and Percent For Sierra County, 2000

	Numbers	Percent
Total Population 5 years and over	12,668	100%
Speaks English Only	9,928	76.4
Language Other Than English	2,340	21.5
Speaks English less than "very well"	822	6.5
Spanish Speaking	2,573	20.3
Speaks English less than "very well"	799	6.3
Other Indo-European Language	131	1
Speaks English less than "very well"	13	1
Asian & Pacific Island Language	19	1
Speaks English less than "very well"	7	1

Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Factfinder 2000

Household Make-up & Housing

Table #9 shows the household make-up in Sierra County. These numbers were taken from the 2000 Census and may not reflect what is current in 2005. The totals included both owner and renter occupied housing units.

TABLE #9: Number and Percent of Household Make-Up Sierra County, 2000

	Number	Percent
Total population in occupied housing units	13,004	100.00%
Total Family households	3,617	30.10%
Married-couple family	2,904	22.30%
Male householder, no wife present	190	1.46%
Female householder, no husband present	523	4.02%
Total non-family households	2,496	19.19%
Male householder	1,272	9.78%
Living Alone	1,083	8.33%
65 years and older living alone	509	3.91%
Not living alone	189	1.45%
Female householder	1,224	9.41%
Living Alone	1,111	8.54%
65 years and older living alone	673	5.18%
Not living alone	113	0.88%

Source: U.S. Census Factfinder 2000

Population Definition (cont')

Household Make-up & Housing (cont')

Table #10 shows the total number of physical housing units in Sierra County and whether they are occupied by the owner or rented. This table also shows the number and percent of vacant housing units. Note that 59% of these vacant housing units are used as vacation homes or by our snowbirds.

**TABLE #10: Percent of Total Housing Occupancy
Sierra County, 2000**

	Number	Percent
Total # of Housing Units	8,727	100%
Occupied Housing Units	6,113	70%
Owner-occupied housing	4,578	74.90%
Renter-occupied housing	1,535	25.10%
Vacant Housing Units	2,614	100%
For rent	323	12.40%
For sale only	265	10.10%
Rented or sold, not occupied	78	3.00%
Seasonal or occasional use	1,543	59.00%
For migratory workers	21	0.80%
Other vacant	384	14.70%

Source: *U.S. Census Factfinder, 2000*

Health Conditions Identified (Health Status Indicators)

Births

Table #11 shows the birth rates in Sierra County broken down by age. Note that births in the high risk age group of 15-19 has steadily declined since 1995. This can be attributed to pregnancy prevention classes offered by Maternal Child Health.

TABLE #11: Resident Birth Rates By Age of Mother*
Sierra County, 1995-2001

Age	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
15-19	107.9	88.7	128.8	89.4	62.1	53.8	49
20-24	168.3	150.2	150.9	116.8	186.4	173.2	145.7
25-29	117.9	142.1	162.4	109.5	90.5	112.1	115.9
30-34	69.4	88.2	80.7	61.3	129.4	29.8	75.3
35-39	15.4	41.7	23.1	19.5	24	18.7	11
40-44	3.3	6.3	3.2	3.1	3.1	2.4	2.4

* Rate per 1,000 women

Source: *Office of NM Vital Records and Health Statistics, 2003*

Low Birth Weight

Low Birth Weight (LBW) is defined as an infant weight of less than 2,500 grams or 4 ½ lbs at the time of delivery. Birth weight is one of the most important factors in determining the survival and health of an infant. Risk factors include: maternal age of less than 17 and greater than 34 years, race/ethnicity, low socioeconomic status, single marital status, lower levels of maternal education, smoking, inadequate weight gain, low pre-pregnancy weight and a variety of medical risk factors.

Source: *NM Vital Records and Health Statistics, 2003*

Table #12 shows a comparison of the number of Sierra County low birth weights to New Mexico's low birth weights since 1995. While Sierra County has decreased their numbers, New Mexico numbers have increased.

TABLE #12: Number of Low Birth Weights 1995-2001
Sierra County and New Mexico

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Sierra County	9	12	8	11	11	4	5
New Mexico	2,017	2,041	2,086	2,042	2,078	2,180	2,147

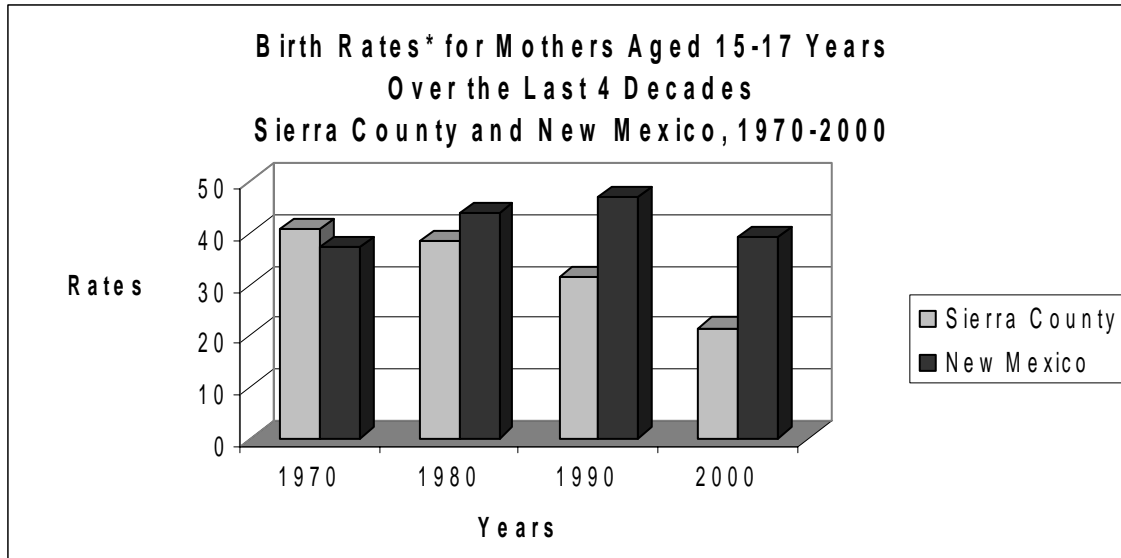
Source: *Office of NM Vital Records and Health Statistics, 2003*

Health Conditions Identified (cont')

Births to Teens

Figure #5 shows the birth rate to mothers in their teens from 1970 to 2000. Teens who become pregnant often do not receive proper prenatal care thus risking low birth weight babies and medical conditions that could otherwise have been avoided. Maternal Child Health in Sierra County has taken an active role in educating teens in pregnancy prevention. The reduction in Sierra County's teen birth rate may be due to this effort.

FIGURE #5



	1970	1980	1990	2000
Sierra County	40.7	38.6	31.3	21.5
New Mexico	37.2	43.9	46.9	39.1

* Rates per 1,000 female population ages 15-17 years.

Source: *Office of NM Vital Records and Health Statistics, 2003*

CHALLENGE 2005: To Reduce Teen Pregnancy in New Mexico by 20% by 2005

Former Governor, Gary Johnson issued the Challenge 2005 Campaign in 2000. Sierra County Maternal Child Health, Sierra Public Health and other agencies in the community collaborated in educational promotions, such as abstinence classes, to help reduce teen pregnancy in Sierra County.

Governor Bill Richardson proclaimed May as *Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month*. The members of Community United for Quality Living / Unidos Para Salud who are focusing on Maternal Child Health issues will be continuing their excellent work in educating teens in pregnancy prevention to continue decreasing the teen birth rate in Sierra County.

Since 2000 Sierra County has reduced teen birth rate by 65.0%.

Source: *Certificate of Recognition from Teen Pregnancy Coalition, 2004*

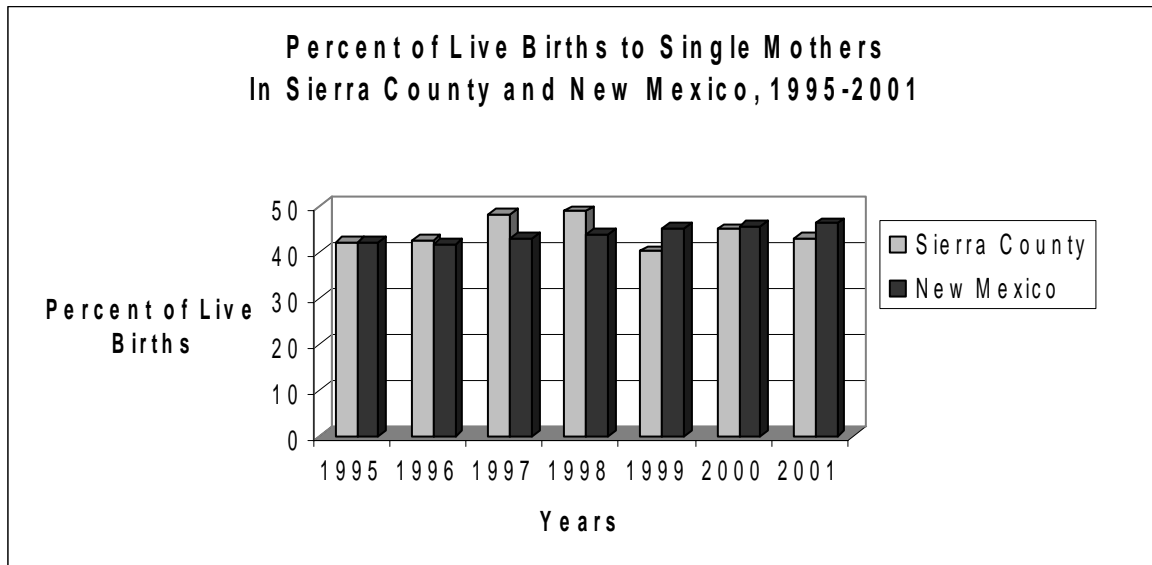
In May of 2004 Maternal Child Health accepted their 4th letter of recognition for continuing to reduce teen pregnancy in Sierra County.

Health Conditions Identified (cont')

Births to Single Mothers

Births to single mothers are at high risk for low birth weight babies as well as medical complications. Many single mothers live in poverty and have little or no health insurance. Without prenatal care, both mother and child are at risk. **Figure #6** shows that both Sierra County and New Mexico are maintaining a consistent level of live births to single mothers, although this percent continues to be less than 50% of live births to single mothers.

FIGURE #6



	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Sierra County	42.3	42.5	48.4	48.9	40.2	45	42.9
New Mexico	42.3	41.7	43.2	44	45.1	45.6	46.3

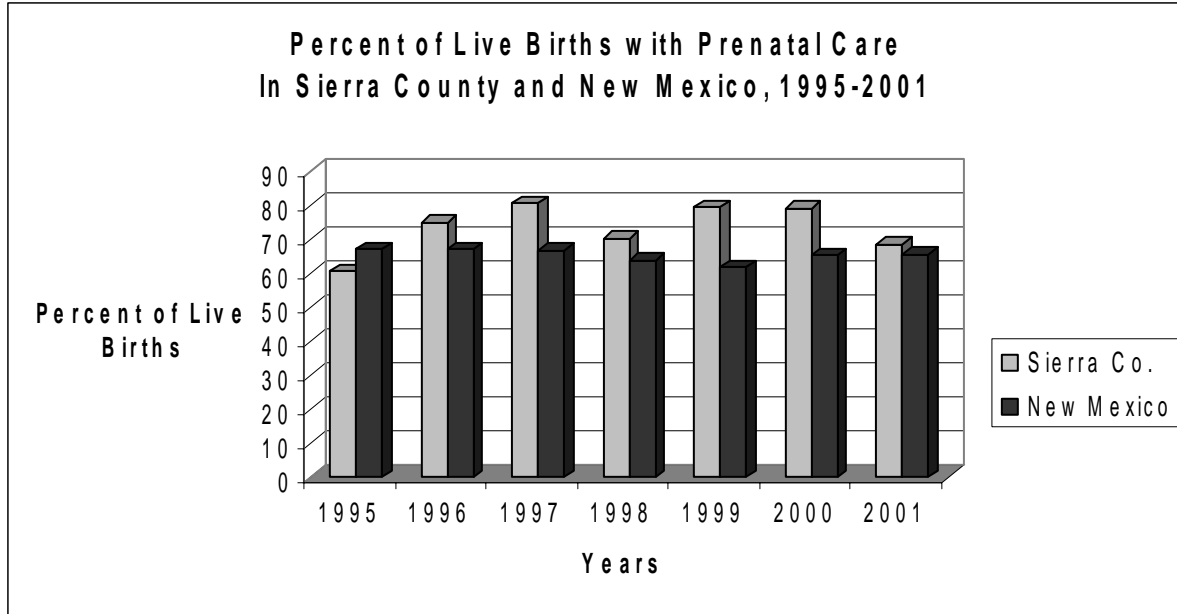
Source: *Office of NM Vital Records and Health Statistics, 2003*

Health Conditions Identified (cont')

Prenatal Care

Figure #7 shows the percent of live births born to all mothers who receive pre-natal care.

FIGURE #7



	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Sierra Co.	60.4	75	80.5	70.2	79.5	79	68.6
New Mexico	66.9	67.1	66.8	63.8	61.9	65.3	65.5

Source: Office of NM Vital Records and Health Statistics, 2003

Immunization

Immunization Rate

The U.S. Center for Disease Control does an annual telephone survey to determine how many children age 19 - 35 months are up-to-date with vaccinations. The estimates for the 2nd Quarter of 2004, as reported by New Mexico Department of Health Immunization Coalition:

Sierra County*	60%
New Mexico	74%
National	74%

* These estimates show that 14% of the children in **Sierra County** are not adequately protected against diseases such as measles, mumps, rubella, diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis. This is a 29% increase in immunizations since last year. Children who are up-to-date on vaccinations are protected against a number of preventable diseases and as a by-product are receiving other preventative treatments such as check-ups.

An **Immunization Coalition** made up of the County Public Health Department, Maternal Child Health, Sierra Vista Hospital and Ben Archer Health Clinic are working together to improve this indicator by sharing information and sponsoring immunization clinics (such as the one held in April as a part of the Children's FunFest).

Health Conditions Identified (cont')

Deaths

**TABLE #13: Numbers and Rates of Deaths
in Sierra County
1996-2002**

YEAR	Number of Male Deaths	Number of Female Deaths	Total Number of Deaths	Death Rate
2002	136	85	221	17
2001	135	81	216	16.1
2000	116	94	210	15.8
1999	132	91	223	20.3

Source: *New Mexico Selected Health Statistic Annual Report, 2002*

Sierra County's crude death rate increased from 16.1 in 2001 to 17.0 deaths per 1,000 population in 2002. Sierra County accounts for 1.6% of all New Mexico resident deaths.

Crude Death Rate is the number of deaths per 1,000 population. This includes all deaths from all causes in the total population of Sierra County.

Leading Causes of Deaths

Heart disease, Malignant neoplasms (cancer) and Chronic lower respiratory disease were the 3 leading causes of death in 2002, accounting for 57% of all deaths in Sierra County. The same 3 chronic diseases account for 57% of all of New Mexico.

**TABLE #14: Number and Percent Distribution
Of Five Top Leading Causes of Death
For Sierra County and New Mexico, 2002**

Cause	Number	% of Total Deaths	
	Sierra Co	Sierra Co	NM
Heart Disease	54	24%	30%
Malignant neoplasm(cancer)	52	24%	15%
Chronic lower Respiratory Dis.	19	9%	11%
Nephritis (kidney disorder)	13	6%	6%
Accidents (unintentional injuries)	12	5.4%	2%
Total for all causes	221	97%	100%

Source: *NM Selected Health Statistics Annual Report, 2004*

Deaths by Infectious Disease

No County data on Deaths by Infectious Disease have been identified.

Health Conditions Identified (cont')

Deaths by Chronic Disease

Chronic disease can be defined as disease which has one or more of the following characteristics: is permanent, leaves residual disability; is caused by nonreversible pathological alternation, requires special training of the patient for rehabilitation, or may be expected to require a long period of supervision, observation, or care. Note in **Table #15** Sierra County has a higher percent of death from chronic respiratory disease and nephritis than New Mexico while other chronic disease deaths are similar to the proportion of chronic disease deaths for New Mexico.

TABLE #15: Number and Percent of Selected Chronic Disease Deaths in Sierra County and New Mexico 2002

Cause	2002	Percent of Total Deaths	
	Number	Sierra Co	NM
Heart Disease	54	24%	22%
Malignant neoplasm(cancer)	52	24%	22%
Chronic lower Respiratory Dis.	19	9%	6%
Nephritis (kidney disorder)	13	6%	2%
Cerebrovascular disease (stroke)	10	4.5%	5%
Influenza and Pneumonia	8	3.6%	4%
Alzheimer's disease	6	2.7%	2%
Chronic Liver Disease & Cirrhosis	5	2.3%	2%
Total for all causes	210	100%	100%

Source: *New Mexico Selected Health Statistics Annual Report, 2002*

Deaths by Injury

Table #16, Page 22 shows the number of deaths in Sierra County between the years 1999 to 2000. The age adjusted death rate between Sierra County and New Mexico shows the death rate in Sierra County to be higher than the rate of the whole state. Note that Sierra County's rate of death from firearms is three times higher than New Mexico's rate of death from fire arms.

Health Conditions Identified (cont')

Deaths by Injury (cont')

TABLE #16: Age-adjusted Mechanism Injury Deaths by Number & Rate for Sierra County, 1999-2000

Mechanism of Injury	Sierra County Number of Deaths 1999 - 2000	Sierra County Age Adjusted Rate 100,000 per Year	New Mexico Age Adjusted Rate 100,000 per Year
Cut/Pierce	1	2.5	1.8
Drowning	1	1.6	1.4
Fall	5	5.8	10.2
Fire/burn	0	0	1
Firearm	19	49.6	15.7
Motor Vehicle Traffic	7	18	22.1
Poisoning	5	15.7	17
Other**	9	20.5	14
All Injury	47	113.7	83.2

Source: *Office of NM Vital Records and Health Statistics, 2003*

*Age adjusted death rate adjusted to the 2000 U.S. standard population. Age adjusted death rates weight the age-specific rates for a given population by the age distribution of a standard population, thereby enabling the direct comparison of rates between populations with differing age structures.

** Other includes machinery, cyclist, pedestrian, natural/environmental, struck by or against, suffocation, other specified and unspecified categories.

Source: *Office of NM Vital Records and Health Statistics, 2003*

Homicide & Suicide

TABLE #17: Number and Percent of Deaths By Suicide and Homicide in Sierra County 2000-2001

Cause	2000		2001	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Intentional Self-harm (suicide)	6	3%	5	2%
Assault (homicide)	0	0%	7	3%
Total Causes of Death	210	100%	216	100%

Source: *Office of NM Vital Records and Health Statistics, 2003*

Health Conditions Identified (cont')

Homicide & Suicide (cont')

New Mexico had a suicide rate of 19.3 per 100,000 population, or 1.8 times the national rate of 10.7 per 100,000 in 2001. Sierra County, at a suicide rate of 43.3, shows more than two times the statewide rate.

The Homicide rate in New Mexico from 2000-2002 (8.2 per 100,000) was 1.4 times the national rate (6.0 per 100,000). Sierra County, with a rate of 28.1 was one of four counties with the highest rate of homicide in New Mexico.

Source: *New Mexico Social Indicator Report, 2004*

Morbidity

Infectious Diseases

Infectious disease is defined as a disease caused by agents including bacteria, viruses or parasitic worms. Since air pollution negatively impacts the immune system, the incidence of infectious diseases increases with increased air pollution.

Table #18 shows the number of infectious disease cases reported over the last eight years in Sierra County and New Mexico. Note that the number of Hepatitis B dropped from 15 to 2 over the last eight years. This can be credited to educational classes offered by the TORCH Foundation to high school students.

*The high number of Salmonellosis in 97-99 for Sierra County can be attributed to several restaurants in the community that had to be temporarily shut down due to food poisoning.

**TABLE #18: Number of Infectious Disease Cases
For Sierra County and New Mexico
1994-2002**

Disease	1994-1996		1997-1999		2000-2002	
	Sierra County	NM	Sierra County	NM	Sierra County	NM
GASTROINTESTINAL DISEASES						
Hepatitis A	4	2,254	6	557	1	141
Campylobacter	2	1,117	2	1,093	3	1,059
Salmonellosis	3	1,016	28*	984	4	856
Shigellosis	2	1,900	1	786	1	560
BLOODBORNE DISEASES						
Hepatitis B	15	905	3	736	2	419
AIDS	5	559	1	357	3	270
RESPIRATORY DISEASES						
Pertussis	0	247	1	453	3	426
Tuberculosis	1	139	0	110	1	111

Source: *Office of NM Vital Records and Health Statistics, 2003*

Health Conditions Identified (cont')

Infectious Diseases (cont')

**TABLE #19: Number of Sexually Transmitted Disease Cases
For Sierra County and New Mexico
2001-2002**

Disease	2001		2002	
	Sierra County	NM	Sierra County	NM
Chlamydia	21	6,669	15	7,419
Gonorrhea	6	1,090	1	1,472
Syphilis	1	19	0	39

Source: *Office of NM Vital Records and Health Statistics, 2003*

Chronic Diseases

The Center for Disease Control defines chronic disease as illnesses that are prolonged, do not resolve spontaneously, and are rarely cured completely. Illnesses that fit this broad definition are preventable, and pose a significant burden in mortality, morbidity, and cost.

**TABLE #20: Cancer Incidence Among Males and Females
Number and Rate* for Sierra County
1994-2000 Aggregate**

Cancer Site	MALE		FEMALE	
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate
Stomach	7	8.4	5	6.6
Colon and Rectum	33	41	41	48.1
Liver and Intrahepatic Bile Duct	7	11.5	^	^
Gallbladder	^	^	^	^
Pancreas	11	11.1	6	6.1
Lung and Bronchus	79	92.5	44	54.6
Melanomas of the Skin	15	21.1	9	15
Breast	^	^	66	104.9
Prostate	118	133.9	^	^
Cervix	^	^	7	12.9
Corpus and Uterus, NOS	^	^	9	11.8
Urinary Bladder	28	37.5	8	8.1
Kidney and Renal Pelvis	9	12.1	^	^
Non-Hodgkins Lymphomas	10	16.4	11	12.7
Leukemias	9	9.4	6	6
All Other Cancers	76	107.5	61	96.9
Total Cancers	404	504.5	278	389.1

* Rates per 100.000 and age-adjusted to the 2000 U.S. (19 age groups) standard.

^ Statistics not displayed due to less than 5 cases

Source: *Office of NM Vital Records and Health Statistics, 2003*

Health Conditions Identified (cont')

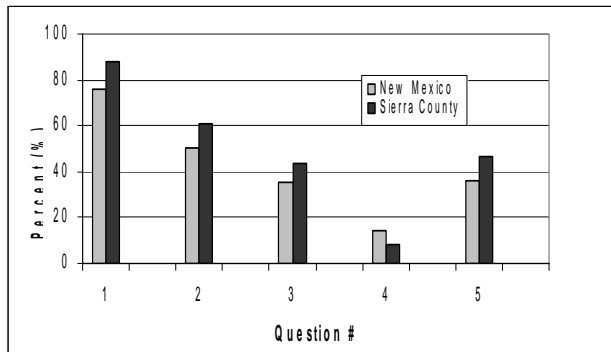
Behavioral Risk Factors

Youth at Risk

The Youth Risk Resiliency Survey (YRRS) is a tool used by school administrators and policy makers to identify health risk behavior among students. Sierra County participated in the YRRS in 2003. A random number of classes at the Hot Springs High School were chosen. 143 students responded to the survey representing approximately 65% of the high school student body.

Figures #8 – 13 show the response to survey questions addressing Alcohol Use, Cigarette Use, Marijuana Use, use of Other Drugs and Sexual Activity. Understand that the YRRS is a self-reporting survey and there is no way to guarantee the truthfulness of the participants.

**FIGURE #8: Alcohol Use
Sierra County and New Mexico
Grades 9 – 12, YRRS, 2003**



	#1 Ever had a drink of alcohol in Lifetime	#2 Had drink of Alcohol in past 30 days	#3 Binge drinking in past 30 days	#4 Alcohol at school in past 30 days	#5 First drink of alcohol at age 12 or under
New Mexico	76.3	50.7	35.4	14.4	35.8
Sierra County	87.8	60.6*	43.8**	7.9	46.9

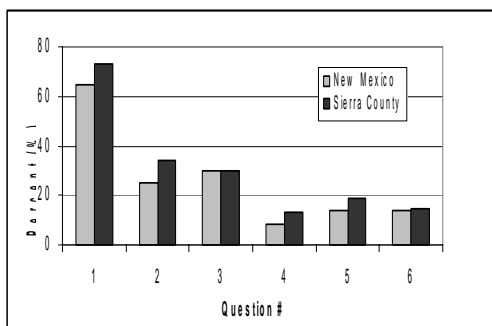
Source: *New Mexico Youth Risk and Resiliency Survey, 2003*

* Sierra County, showing 60.6% alcohol use in the last 30 days, is the 5th highest in the state.

** Binge drinking among 9-12 graders, at 43.8, is 4th highest in New Mexico.

Source: *New Mexico Social Indicator Report, 2004*

**FIGURE #9: Cigarette Smoking
Sierra County and New Mexico
Grades 9-12, YRRS, 2003**



	# 1 Ever tried cigarettes, even a puff	# 2 First smoked a cigarette at age 12 or under	# 3 Current Smoker smoked in past 30 days	# 4 Frequent Smoker smoked 20 of past 30 days	# 5 Smoked at school past 30 days	# 6 Bought cigarettes in a store in past 30 days
New Mexico	64.8	24.7	30.2	8.5	13.6	13.8
Sierra County	72.7	34.3	30.2	13.4	18.5	14.3

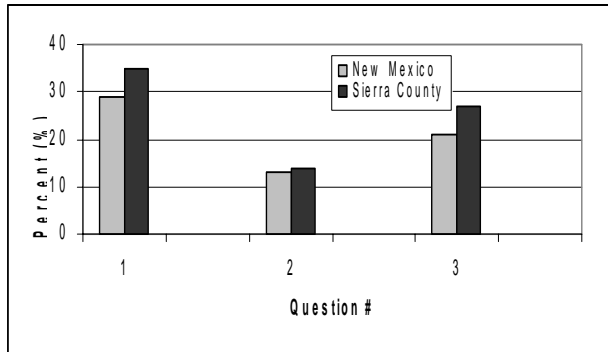
Source: *New Mexico Youth Risk and Resiliency Survey, 2003*

Health Conditions Identified (cont')

Behavioral Risk Factors (cont')

Youth at Risk (cont')

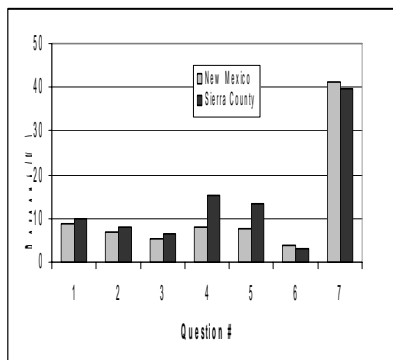
**FIGURE #10: Marijuana Use
Sierra County and New Mexico
Grades 9 – 12, YRRS, 2003**



	# 1 Used Marijuana in the last 30 days	# 2 Used Marijuana at school in the past 30 days	# 3 First used Marijuana at age 12 or younger
New Mexico	29	13.2	21.1
Sierra County	34.9	13.7	26.9

Source: *New Mexico Youth Risk and Resiliency Survey, 2003*

**FIGURE #11: Other Drug Use
Sierra County and New Mexico
Grades 9 – 12, YRRS, 2003**



	# 1 Used Cocaine past 30 days	# 2 Used Inhalants past 30 days	# 3 Used Heroin, past 12 months	# 4 Used Meth-amphetamines, past 12 months	# 5 Used Ecstasy in past 12 months	# 6 Injected Illegal drugs w/ needle in lifetime	# 7 Been offered drugs in school, past 12 months
New Mexico	8.9	6.8	5.2	8.2	7.8	3.7	41.2
Sierra County	10.1	8.2	6.3	15.2	13.5	2.9	39.7

Source: *New Mexico Youth Risk and Resiliency Survey, 2003*

Marijuana use by Sierra County youth, 9-12, at 34.9%, is 12th highest in the state. Use of Cocaine, at 10.1% is 8th in the state. Use of inhalants, at 8.2%, is 11th in the state. **Use of Methamphetamines by 9-12 grades, at 15.2%, is FIRST in New Mexico and use of Ecstasy at 13.5% is THIRD highest in the state.**

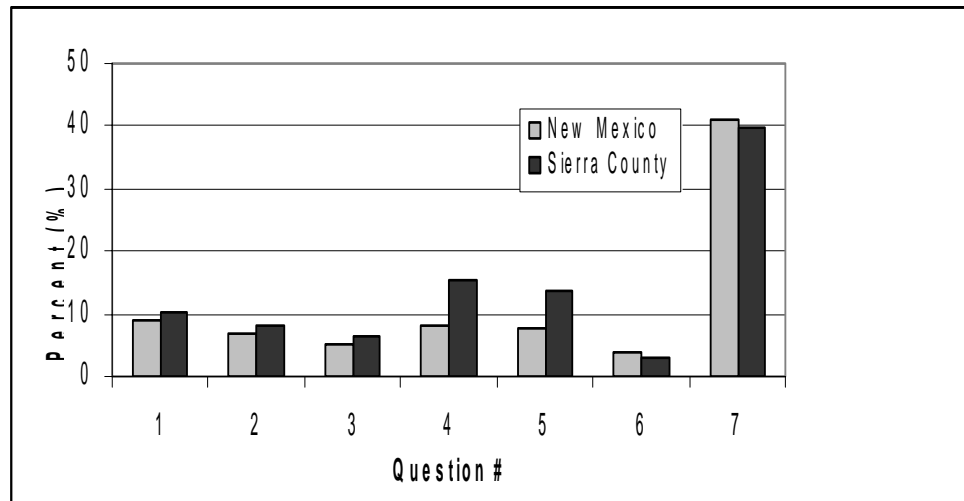
Source: *New Mexico Social Indicator Report, 2004*

Health Conditions Identified (cont')

Behavioral Risk Factors (cont')

Youth at Risk (cont')

**FIGURE #13 Sexual Activity
Sierra County and New Mexico
Grades 9 – 12, YRRS, 2003**



	#1 Ever had Intercourse	#2 Currently Sexually Active	#3 First sexual Intercourse at age 12 or younger	#4 Alcohol or drugs use before last sexual Inter.	#5 No condom use, last sexual intercourse	#6 Sexually responsible	#7 Uses BCP as primary pregnancy prevention
New Mexico	8.9	6.8	8.2	15.2	7.8	3.7	41.2
Sierra County	10.1	8.2	5.2	15.2	13.5	2.9	39.7

Source: *New Mexico Youth Risk and Resiliency Survey, 2003*

Adults at Risk

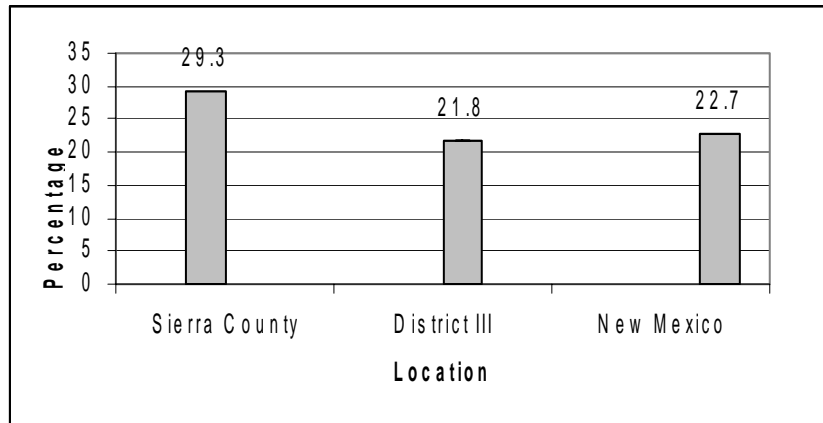
Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey (BRFSS) is a nationwide survey that collects data on the presence of health issues in the adult population and behaviors that affect risk for disease. This survey is conducted on the telephone, where random numbers are chosen. Over the course of a 5 year period, 161 people in Sierra County responded to the BRFSS. District III includes the total of people who responded in, Catron, Dona Ana, Grant, Hidalgo, Luna, Otero, Sierra and Socorro Counties. Over 5 years this total was 3,695. The total for the entire state of New Mexico was 18,650 over 5 years. **Figures #14 – 16** show weighted estimates accompanied by a 95% confidence interval, which has a 95% probability of containing the real population value. Note that Sierra County totals are included in District III and District III totals are included in New Mexico.

Health Conditions Identified (cont')

Behavioral Risk Factors (cont')

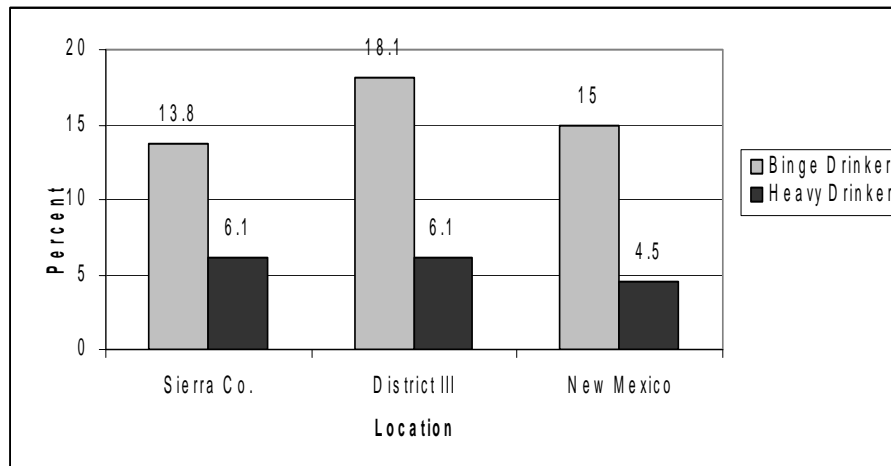
Adults at Risk (cont')

FIGURE #14: Percent of Adults Reported as Current Smokers, Sierra County, Health District III, and New Mexico Aggregated 1998 - 2002



Source: NM Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System 1998-2002

FIGURE #15: Percent of Adults Reported as Binge and Heavy Drinkers, Sierra County, District III and New Mexico Aggregated 1998 - 2000



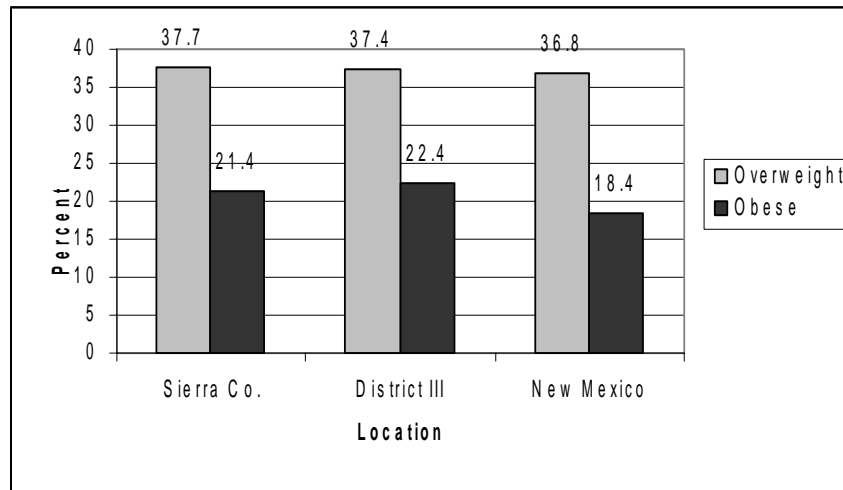
Source: NM Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 1998-2002

Health Conditions Identified (cont')

Behavioral Risk Factors (cont')

Adults at Risk (cont')

**FIGURE #16: Percent of Adults who are Overweight or Obese
Sierra County, District III, and New Mexico
Aggregated 1998 - 2002**



Source: NM Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 1998-2002

Behavioral Health

Mental Health

No county specific data was available from service providers in Sierra County at the time of this writing.

Substance Abuse

DWI Facts for Sierra County, 2003:

- 16 Alcohol-involved crashes (drivers were drunk)
- 12 of these 16 drivers had driving records
- 3 People died and 16 were injured in alcohol-involved crashes
- 111 People were convicted of DWI through municipal and magistrate court
- 10 of these 111 reported no fine imposed
- 13 of these 111 reported no days in jail
- Total economic impact to Sierra County, \$8 million or \$576 per person.

Source: DWI Resource Center, 2004

Health Conditions Identified (cont')

Behavioral Health (cont')

Drug Overdose Data for Sierra County 1998-2002

The New Mexico Department of Health provided the following data:

- 1998-2000** No drug overdose deaths were noted
- 2001** There were 3 deaths from drug overdose (2 from prescription drugs.)
- 2002** 1 drug overdose death was noted in this year.

The drug-related death rate for Sierra County is 18.3 per 100,000 population for 2000-2002. This puts Sierra County as the 9th highest county in New Mexico for drug-related deaths.

Source: *New Mexico Social Indicator Report, 2004*

Disability

Disability is defined as: A severe chronic disability of a person which is attributable to a mental or physical impairment, including the result of trauma to the brain, or a combination of mental and physical impairments; is manifested before the person attains age twenty-two; is likely to continue indefinitely; results in substantial functional limitations in three or more of the following areas of major life activity: Self-care, Receptive or Expressive Language, Learning, Mobility, Self-direction, Capacity for Independent Living, Economic Self-sufficiency, and, reflects the person's need for a combination and sequence of special interdisciplinary or generic care treatment or other services that are of life-long or extended duration and which are individually planned and coordinated.

Source: *New Mexico Department of Health, Long Term Services Division, 2003*

Table #21 shows that Sierra County has a total of 3,996 people living with disabilities in 2000.

TABLE #21: Number and Percent of Disabled Population in Sierra County 2000

Age	Number		Percent		Total Population	
	Sierra Co.	NM	Sierra Co.	NM	Sierra Co.	NM
5 to 20	294	37,135	12.1	8.1	2,432	457,185
21 to 64	1,871	209,280	28.9	21	6,468	996,726
65 & older	1,831	92,015	52.1	44.8	3,512	205,591

Source: *U.S. Census, Factfinder, 2004*

Health Conditions Identified (cont')

Abuse & Neglect of Children

Youth and Family Intervention Services have begun tracking their agency's involvement with children who are victims of emotional, physical, psychological and sexual trauma. This data will be available for the 2006 Health Profile.

Table #22 shows the numbers and percent of reported child abuse and neglect cases in Sierra County. The increase in investigations beginning in 1999 can be attributed to the implementation of the Statewide Central Intake (SCI) 24 Hour Hotline, which allows for anyone being abused or who suspects abuse to call in and report.

**TABLE #22: Number and Percent of
Child Abuse and Neglect Cases in Sierra County
1998-2001**

	1998	1999	2000	2001
Total Reports	33	162	166	175
Accepted Reports	26	91	105	104
Total Investigations	88	520	102	94
% Substantiated	48	16	35	37
Alleged Victims	110	747	146	141
% Substantiated	40	16	27	33

Source: *New Mexico Kids Count, 2002*

Domestic Violence

Table #23 shows the numbers of adults and children that were served by the Domestic Abuse Intervention Center in Sierra County. Note that the numbers of victims have been steadily increasing since 1999. Domestic Violence is often linked to substance abuse and mental health problems. Both of these issues are being addressed by members of the Community United for Quality Living Health Council.

**TABLE #23: Number of Domestic Violence Victims Served by
The Domestic Abuse Intervention Center (DAIC)
Sierra County 1999-2001**

Year	Adult Victims	Child Victims	DV Involving Weapon	Total DV Victims Served	% DV Victims Served	Pop Total Sierra Co.
1999	64	49	6	113	1.02	11,025
2000	77	53	13	130	0.97	13,270
2001	86	127	9	213	1.6	13,270

Source: *NM Injury Prevention and EMS Bureau, Department of Health, 2001*

Health Conditions Identified (cont')

Environmental Health

The Community United for Quality Living Health Council is aware that this is an area which lacks County specific information. A community survey has been started and will provide primary data for the 2006 Profile. An Emergency Response and Environmental Health Fair will be offered in mid April 2005 to provide the public with information and education on Environmental Health.

Community Resiliency

There is currently no data being collected regarding community resiliency for Sierra County. The Community United for Quality Living Health Council will be collaboration with the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) in creating an Emergency Response and Environmental Health Fair for mid April 2005. Surveys will be conducted on community awareness of Homeland Security and Community Resiliency during the next year to provide data for the 2006 Health Profile.

Dental (Oral) Health

The Community United for Quality Living / Unidos Para Salud Health Council will be working with the dental providers in Sierra County in FY06 to collect local data on Dental (Oral) Health.

Wellness

Child immunization data has been previously provided. Community United for Quality Living Health Council will work with Ben Archer Health Clinic and the Public Health Office in collecting local data on adult immunizations annual health check-ups for FY06.

Sierra County has two Gyms and a Yoga Center that provided the following current information for 2005:

Jungle Gym in Elephant Butte

- Age Range of Participants: 16 – 90 years old
- 70% of participants are 60 years and older
- Enrollment averages 100-150 per month depending on the season

Curves in Truth or Consequences

- Age Range of Participants: 14 – 91 years old
- 75% of participants are 60 years and older
- Enrollment averages 200 per month depending on the season

Studio La Luz (Movement / Yoga) Truth or Consequences

- All age range
- 15-20% of participants are 60 years and older
- 10-15 people per week in classes
- 120 people per year in workshops
- 10% of participants are non-Sierra County residents

ASSESSING NEEDS FROM RESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

Health System Capacity

Access to Care

Dental Health

New Mexico Health Policy Commission defines a “dental health shortage area” as one in which there is less than 1 dentist per 5,000 population or 1 per 4,000 if the population has a high need for dental care. **Sierra County** currently has 3 dentists, 2 working out of the Ben Archer Health Clinic, which provides services on a sliding scale, and 1 private practice dentist who will accept a limited number of Medicaid patients. With a population of 13,000, Sierra County is classified as a dental shortage area.

Source: *New Mexico Health Policy Commission, Quick Facts, 2003*

Medical Health

New Mexico Health Policy Commission defines a “health professional shortage area” as one in which there is less than 1 primary care physician per 3,500 population or 1 per 3,000 if the population has a high need for primary care services. Sierra County currently has 10 M.D.s on staff at Sierra Vista Hospital, 2 of whom work out of the Ben Archer Health Clinic, which provides services on a sliding scale. With a population of 13,000, Sierra County is classified as a health professional shortage area.

Source: *New Mexico Health Policy Commission, Quick Facts, 2003*

Mental Health

New Mexico Health Policy Commission defines a “mental health professional shortage area” as one in which there is less than 1 mental health professional per 6,000 population and 1 psychiatrist per 20,000 or 1 mental health professional per 4,500 and 1 psychiatrist per 15,000 if the population has a high need for a mental health care. Sierra County currently has 4 mental health professionals and 1 psychiatrist who work out of the Sierra Vista Counseling Center. In addition there are 2 mental health professionals who work out of the Ben Archer Clinic, one who works primarily with Veterans. There is also 1 mental health professional who is in private practice and sees Medicaid clients and offers a sliding scale. With a population of 13,000, Sierra County is classified as a mental health professional shortage area.

Source: *New Mexico Health Policy Commission, Quick Facts, 2003*

Transportation

Sierra County has no public or private transportation system available. What services there are come through agencies – Maternal Child Health, Ben Archer Health Clinic, the Office on Aging, the Council of Governments, the DAV and Safe Ride. In every case, transportation is funded for specific populations and specific needs and agencies have not been allowed to collaborate in the creation of a more general and efficient service. In almost every case, funds for transportation are year-to-year so that the level and type of service available frequently changes or disappears all together.

Health System Capacity (cont')

Transportation (cont')

An RFP was submitted to the state Highway Department in 2004. The RFP was a request for funds to support a small mass transit system to run daily between Truth or Consequences and Elephant Butte. This transportation system would be implemented in January 2006.

Utilization:

TABLE #24: Rate of Inpatient Hospital Usage Per 1,000 Residents in Sierra County and New Mexico, 2000-2001

Reason	2000		2001	
	Sierra Co.	NM	Sierra Co	NM
Neoplasma (Cancer)	51	24	56	24
Digestive Disease	47	31	34	31
Respiratory Disease	75	45	45	45
Circulatory Disease	98	46	77	46
Alcohol / Drug	11	17	28	19
Mental Illness	105	60	110	67
Treatment of Injury	59	40	63	41

Source: *New Mexico Health Policy Commission, 2003*

Table #25 shows the hospital discharge numbers for insured patients in Sierra County and New Mexico. The percent represents the percent of the total discharges that are Medicare or Medicaid patients.

TABLE #25: Hospital Discharge Number and Percent For Insured Patients in Sierra County and New Mexico, 2000-2001

	Medicare		Medicaid		Private Insurance		Total Discharges
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Sierra County 2000	613	46	234	17	350	26	1,197
New Mexico 2000	57,753	32	39,468	23	64,477	36	161,698
Sierra County 2001	541	38	296	21	432	30	1,269
New Mexico 2001	58,126	32	42,921	24	62,278	34	163,325

Source: *New Mexico Health Policy Commission, 2003*

Health System Capacity (cont')

Utilization: (cont')

Table #26 shows the discharge numbers for uninsured patients in Sierra County and New Mexico. The percent represents the percent of total discharges that are insured and uninsured.

**TABLE #26: Hospital Discharge Number and Percent
For Uninsured Patients in Sierra County and New Mexico,
2000-2001**

	Uninsured		Insured	Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Discharges
Sierra County 2000	111	8	33	2	144
New Mexico 2000	13,859	8	4,738	3	18,597
Sierra County 2001	130	9	24	2	154
New Mexico 2001	13,744	8	4,519	2	18,263

Source: *New Mexico Health Policy Commission, 2003*

Funding Needs

Sierra County continues to have a great need for funding, especially with budgets for programs and services that will be cut in FY06. Direct services that have enabled Sierra County to decrease numbers such as teen pregnancy will be struggling to maintain these low numbers. The Community United for Quality Living Health Council will continue to work help identify other funding sources to keep the direct services, previously provided by Maternal Child Health, active in Sierra County.

ASSET & RESOURCE ASSESSMENT

Citizen's Corp

Open to any community member, Citizen's Corp trains people to develop a household preparedness plan and disaster supplies kit, to put to use home health and safety practices, to assist during a disaster and to assist in crime prevention and reporting. The Citizen's Corp also sponsors Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) trainings.

Sierra Community Council

A non-profit organization dedicated to encouraging citizen participation in improving the quality of life in Sierra County through education, supporting the development and implementation of community goals, facilitating collaboration and building capacity to solve problems locally. Sierra Community Council also maintains the Information and Referral Directory. This Directory provides important information on organizations and agencies that serve Sierra County and is available on paper, in CD format and on the Sierra Community Council's Website at <http://www.sierracounty.net/>. Over 100 organizations and agencies are represented in this Directory.

Sierra County Services Coalition

SCSC is a network of health and human service agencies that has been meeting monthly since 1996. The meetings consist of information sharing about current services and provides opportunities to collaborate on grants and projects. Members of the Services Coalition will be working closely with the Community United for Quality Living Health Council to create focus groups around priority issues.

ANALYSIS / SUMMARY

Long considered a retirement community, Sierra County population estimates for 2003 continue this trend with the majority of the population between the ages of 55 and 79 years old. Many within this age group are much more aware and concerned for their health and well-being and it is within this age group that many health issues become apparent. Accessibility to quality health care becomes a greater need.

There is an estimated 28% of the Sierra County population who are of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity (**Page 8, Table #1**), with approximately 20% who speak little or no English. Another 6.5% of the Sierra County population speak English less than well. (**Page 14, Table #8**) The inability to read or understand creates many obstacles to living a quality life.

While the state of New Mexico's total income level and total personal income level steadily increases, Sierra County struggles to keep up. From .59% of the total state income in 1997 to .54% in 2002, 18% of Sierra County's population is still living in poverty. (**Page 9, Table #2**)

The drop-out rate of high school students has decreased dramatically since 1995 to 2002. The addition of Geronimo Trails High School as an alternative to traditional high school has been a big factor in this decrease. (**Page 13, Figure #4**) Amazingly enough, funding for this alternative program becomes an annual concern.

Birth rates for Sierra County are showing a decrease in mothers under 24 years of age and an increase in mothers between the ages of 25 and 34 years. (**Page 16, Table #11**) The Sierra County Maternal Child Health and other agencies have been very involved in educating young girls about abstinence and teen pregnancy. This, in turn has decreased the risk of low birth weight babies. (**Page 16, Table 12**) Funding is being cut for fiscal year 2006 and this form of direct service continues to be at risk of losing ground on continuing to improve these statistics.

Prenatal care services continue to be unavailable within Sierra County. Expectant mothers must travel 1 hour South to Las Cruces, 1 hour North to Socorro, or 2 hours North to Albuquerque. Statistics show that the percentage of live births to mothers who have had prenatal care has dropped somewhat. (**Page 19, Figure #7**) Another service that Maternal Child Health has provided is transportation to prenatal care appointments. This service has insured that many of these mothers receive prenatal care. Again, with funding cuts possibly eliminating this service these statistics will continue to decline.

Nephritis or kidney disorder is considered one of the top five leading causes of death in Sierra County in 2002. (**Page 20, Table #14**) This disease has close ties with diabetes which continues to be a big concern for the older population and is beginning to show up in the younger population as well. The Community United for Quality Living Health Council continues working on diet, nutrition and exercise programs for all ages to help prevent diabetes and nephritis.

The high number of deaths from firearm injuries (**Page 22, Table #16**) raises questions about gun education and safety. Law Enforcement agencies are now handing out free gun locks to gun owners, a positive step toward finding a solution.

Analysis / Summary (cont')

Due to lack of funding in 2003 the TORCH Foundation closed its doors. This organization provided education and resources to the community regarding HIV/AIDS, STDs and other infectious diseases. Peer educator groups and /or adult trainers made presentations in the schools and made a significant impact on the students. Statistics show increased awareness through the decrease in the number of cases of STDs and infectious diseases. **(Page 23, Table #18 & Page 24, Table 19)** Although TORCH volunteers are continuing educational efforts, there is concern that the lack of funding will eventually eliminate the service completely, leading to an increase in the number of STD and infectious disease cases among our younger population.

The Youth Risk and Resiliency Survey (YRRS) conducted in Sierra County in 2003 shows that alcohol use still ranks high among our 9-12 graders. **(Page 25, Figure #8)** Of really concern is what the YRRS showed for the use of Methamphetamine and Ecstasy. Meth use among Sierra County youth is ranked first in the state with Ecstasy ranking third. **(Page 26, Figure #11)**

Smoking continues to rank high with the adult population. Lung cancer ranks third as the leading cause of death in Sierra County with heart disease as first. **(Page 21, Table #15)** Smoking cessation classes are one solution but again, education must begin with the youth if this trend is to be improved.

Obesity, recognized as a national health care issue, contributes to the list of health concerns in Sierra County. With percentages of overweight and obese adults exceeding New Mexico state levels, the issue of nutrition, diet and exercise must be addressed through education, weight reduction and exercise programs and social media. **(Page 29, Figure 16)**

Approximately 50% of Sierra County's population is living with some form of disability. **(Page 30, Table #21)** Considering that any form of disability can affect the quality of a person's life, this issue should be considered a high priority when looking at any changes in the community.

The condition of Sierra County's mental health is reflected in such statistics as child abuse and neglect, domestic violence, and the high rate of homicide and suicide. As mental health ties in with so many other concerns this will also be one of Sierra County's high priorities.

Similar to mental health, the issue of people in Sierra County being unable to access any form of health care due to lack of transportation ties into many other issues. People living in more remote areas of the county still must drive 40-60 minutes to come into town for medical care. With the majority of the population in their senior years and many of this population disabled, alternative transportation is desperately needed. Many seniors either cannot or should not be driving. This concern will continue to be a priority into this fiscal year.

The New Mexico Department of Health, District III Epidemiologist Lisa Roth-Edwards and Health Prevention Specialist, Jan Quick once again provided their critique of the previous year's Profile and previewed this Profile in it's working state. We continue to value their input and assistance.