

# MY HEALTH, MY RESPONSIBILITY, OUR COMMUNITY

## *State of Community Health Report*

*on*

## *Injuries and Accidents in Hamilton County*

This is the fourth in a series of monthly reports from the

### Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Health Council

Viston Taylor, Chairman

William Hicks, Vice Chairman

May 2000

The Regional Health Council is a community-based organization designated by the Tennessee Department of Health to be responsible for community health assessment, regional health planning, and providing input on funding decisions for health and health-related initiatives. Council members are appointed by the County Executive and the Hamilton County Commission.

The Council identified and prioritized the key health issues facing the community and is developing targeted strategies to address each issue. The five key preventable health issues are: obesity, poor diet and lack of exercise; tobacco use; risky sexual behavior; alcohol and drug use; and lack of involvement in health screenings and other preventive measures.

Data in the report comes from the Hamilton County Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey (BRFSS), the Hamilton County high school's Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), and other sources. The data were compiled and analyzed by the Community Research Council, Inc.

**For More Information:**

Viston Taylor, Alexian Brothers Community Services, 698-0802

William Hicks, Chattanooga / Hamilton County Medical Society, 622-2872

Bill Ulmer, Hamilton County Health Department, 209-8088

Ione Farrar, Community Research Council, 267-7766

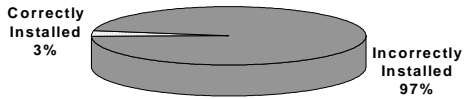
**Media Contacts:**

Judy Frank, Chattanooga / Hamilton County Health Department, 209-8238

Rae Young Bond, First Things First, 267-5383

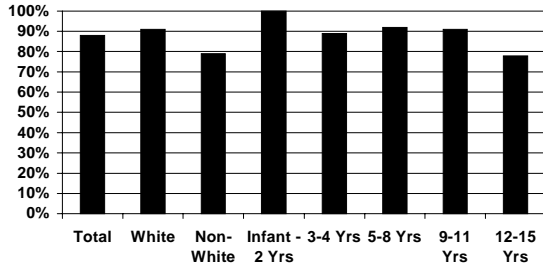
# Hamilton County Injury Prevention

**Results of Care Safety Seat Checks  
(1997 to Present)**

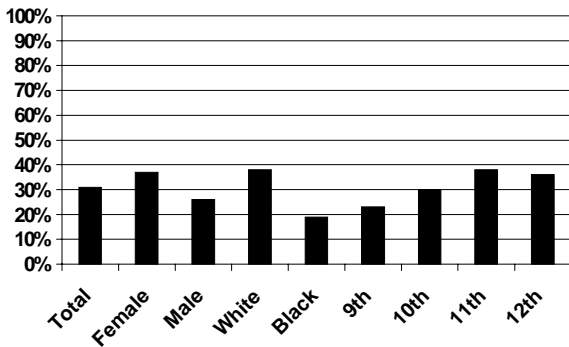


Source: Chattanooga Safe Kids

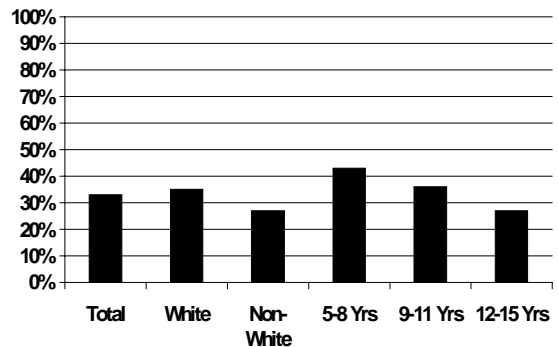
**Parents Reporting Oldest Child  
Always Wears Seat Belt**



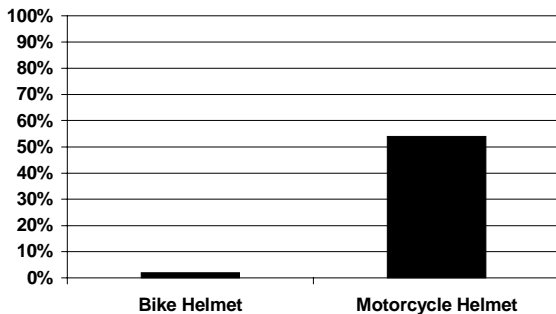
**Percentage of High School Students  
Reporting They Always Wear Seat Belt**



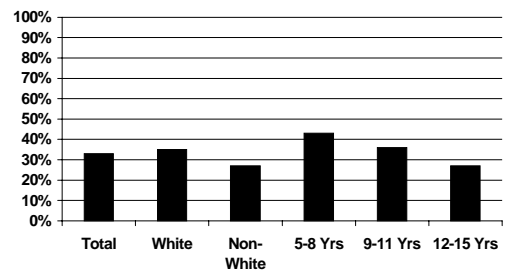
**Percentage of Adults  
Who Always Wear Seat Belt**



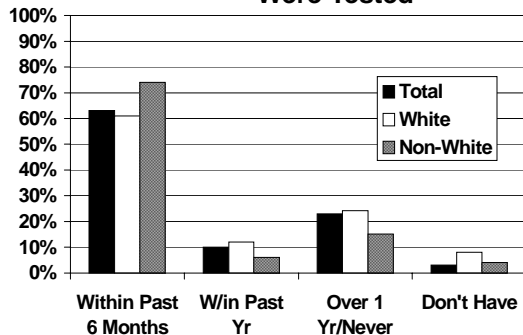
**Percentage of High School Riders  
Who Always Wear Helmet**



**Parents Reporting Their Oldest Child  
Always Wears Bike Helmet**



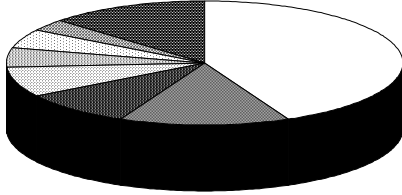
**Last Time All Smoke Detectors in Home  
Were Tested**



This report represents data from the 1999 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey (BRFSS) of 1,037 adults, and the 1998 Youth Risk Behavior Survey of 2,990 Hamilton County public high school students. The questionnaires and methodologies used were similar to the Centers for Disease Control's BRFSS and YRBS surveys, which are conducted nationwide (the BRFSS survey annually; the YRBS biannually). While every effort was made to design questionnaires that would not be leading or tend to encourage particular responses, and the methodologies were designed to collect data in as impersonal a manner as possible, it should be remembered that all activities and personal information were self-reported. Due to the personal nature of this study and human nature, certain health-related behaviors may have been over- or under-reported.

## Accidental Deaths and Injuries in Hamilton County

### Hamilton County Accidental Deaths 1998



□ Motor Vehicle □ Falls □ Choking □ Poisoning  
□ Drowning □ Physical Blow □ Fire □ Other

### Trends

- While from 1996 to 1998, the overall death rate **decreased** by 43% (from 18.7 to 10.6 per 100,000), deaths from:
  - ◆ Motor Vehicle Accidents **increased** 84% (from 11.0 to 15.1 per 100,000)
  - ◆ All Other Accidents **increased** 31% (from 11.5 to 15.1 per 100,000), and
  - ◆ Poisonings **increased** 9% (from 51.6 to 56.5 per 100,000).

## What Do These Injuries Cost All of Us?

### Overall

- Preventable injuries are the leading cause of death for Hamilton County residents ages one to 44, responsible for 128 deaths in 1998. (*Tennessee Department of Health*)
- In 1999, Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Tennessee paid more than \$34 million in hospitalization costs to treat accidental injuries. Hospitalization costs represent only 5% of all health care expenses attributable to accidents. (*Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Tennessee*)

### Traumatic Brain Injury

- In 1998, hospitalization costs for Hamilton County's 313 traumatic brain injuries were \$6.2 million. (*Tennessee Department of Health, 1998 Hospital Discharge Data*)
- Vehicle crashes account for 50% brain injuries. (*Brain Injury Association*)

### Motor Vehicle Crashes

- Federal, state, and local government sources pay up to 30% of first year medical costs for hospitalized persons injured in crashes, and up to 3.5 times for non-belted crash victims than for belted victims. (*CDC*)

### Children

- 97% of all the child safety seats checked by Safe Kids of Chattanooga since 1997 were incorrectly installed. (*Chattanooga Safe Kids Coalition*)
- For every child injured, total costs are more than \$12,700, including \$650 in medical costs, more than \$1,000 in future earnings lost, and nearly \$11,000 in quality of life. (*National Safe Kids Campaign*)

### Fall-Related Injuries

- In 1994, the average direct cost for a fall injury was \$1,400 for a person over age 65. (*CDC*)
- Nationally, the direct cost of all fall injuries for people age 65 and older in 1994 was \$20.2 billion. (*CDC*)

## The Value of Prevention

- A 15-percentage point increase in seat belt use (from 66% to 81%) could result in \$59 million annual savings for Hamilton County. (*NTSB*)
- Every dollar spent on a child safety seat saves this country \$32 in direct medical costs and other costs to society. (*National Safe Kids Campaign*)
- Every dollar spent on a bicycle helmet saves this country \$30 in direct medical costs and other costs to society. (*National Safe Kids Campaign*)
- Every dollar spent on a smoke alarm saves this country \$21 in direct medical costs and other costs to society. (*National Safe Kids Campaign*)
- Every dollar spent on poison control centers saves this country \$7 in medical costs. (*National Safe Kids Campaign*)
- The cost of intentional injuries in the United States was \$478 billion in 1997. (*Statistical Abstract of the United States*)

