Birth, marriage, death, disease, and accidents are among the vital statistics collected to help measure the health and well-being of the population. Jennings County had 392 births in 1996, a change of 29 births from five years earlier in 1992 (8.0 percent increase). Of those live births, 78 were to teen mothers under age 20 — or 19.9 percent of all births in the county. Most births occurred to women between the ages of 20 to 29 (56.9 percent) and 30 to 39 (22.2 percent). There were 3 births to women age 40 and older in 1996, and 5 in 1992. The number of teen pregnancies in 1995 was 71, compared to 82 (21.7 percent) in 1990. There were 253 marriages in 1996, and 296 in 1990.

Among Jennings County two-year old children in 1996, 77 percent had been fully immunized. Jennings County had 236 deaths in 1996. Of those deaths, 63 (26.7 percent) were due to heart disease and 70 (29.7 percent) due to cancer. Motor vehicle accidents claimed 7 lives in 1996.

Sadly, in fiscal year 1997, 199 Jennings County children were reported abused and 406 neglected; of those, 52 were substantiated as physical abuse, 26 as sexual abuse, and 192 as neglect. The percent of cases substantiated was 39.2 percent for abuse and 47.3 percent for neglect. The rate of abuse and neglect per 1,000 children under age 18 in Jennings County was 42.3 in 1997, compared to 48.9 in 1996.

Questions to ponder...
Are low-cost health services such as immunization for children available to the working poor? What programs can help children and teens at risk? Are services available to help mothers of newborns? Do schools or other organizations provide education to children on drug and alcohol abuse? Is there a safety-net available to abuse victims?