Birth, marriage, death, disease, and accidents are among the vital statistics collected to help measure the health and well-being of the population. Wayne County had 918 births in 1996, a change of -20 births from five years earlier in 1992 (-2.1 percent decrease). Of those live births, 174 were to teen mothers under age 20 — or 19.0 percent of all births in the county. Most births occurred to women between the ages of 20 to 29 (58.5 percent) and 30 to 39 (21.0 percent). There were 10 births to women age 40 and older in 1996, and 10 in 1992. The number of teen pregnancies in 1995 was 174, compared to 216 (21.4 percent) in 1990. There were 661 marriages in 1996, and 692 in 1990.

Among Wayne County two-year old children in 1996, 70 percent had been fully immunized. Wayne County had 754 deaths in 1996. Of those deaths, 239 (31.7 percent) were due to heart disease and 179 (23.7 percent) due to cancer. Motor vehicle accidents claimed 15 lives in 1996.

Sadly, in fiscal year 1997, 391 Wayne County children were reported abused and 744 neglected; of those, 31 were substantiated as physical abuse, 78 as sexual abuse, and 208 as neglect. The percent of cases substantiated was 27.9 percent for abuse and 28.0 percent for neglect. The rate of abuse and neglect per 1,000 children under age 18 in Wayne County was 17.5 in 1997, compared to 32.1 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?