

# 1 INTRODUCTION

The health of a community is strongly influenced by the demographic composition of its population, and the “community” of Jefferson County is demographically quite diverse. Lifestyles in the county range from those typical of dense urban centers to sparsely-populated, isolated, mountain dwellings. Each type of lifestyle is confronted with different public health issues and requires unique solutions.

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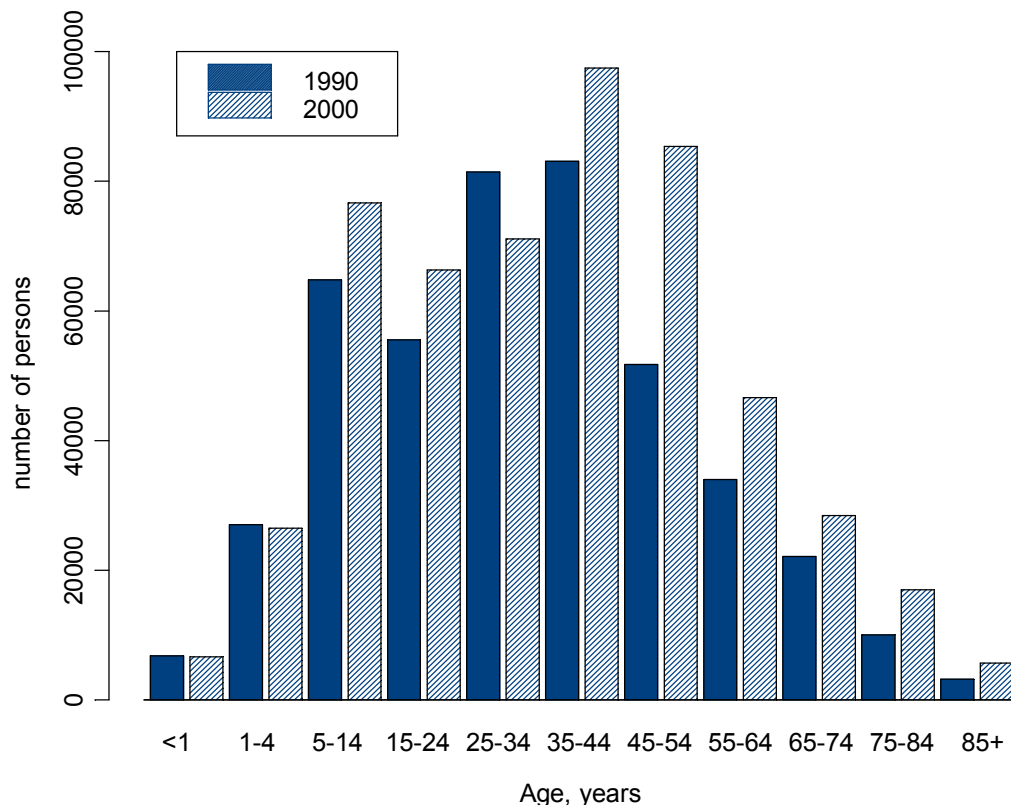
## 1.1 Demographics

According to estimates from the Colorado Department of Local Affairs Demography Section,<sup>2</sup> in the 10-year period from 1990 to 2000, the population of Jefferson County grew 20%, from 439,887 to 527,878 persons.

Certain age segments of the population grew faster than others, providing us insight into the types of public health and health care services that will be required in the future (Figure 1.1). Specifically:

- The number of very young children was quite similar. There were about 6,000 infants (aged 12 months or younger) in 1990 and 2000, and about 27,000 preschool aged children.
- The number of children aged 5 – 14 years, young adults aged 15 – 24 years, and adults aged 35 – 44 years, each grew by about 17 – 19%.
- In 2000, there were 13% fewer adults in the 25 – 34 year age group. This is the only age group that declined in population between the two periods.
- The greatest absolute increase occurred in the number of adults aged 45 – 54 years, growing by over 33,000 persons.
- The largest proportionate increase occurred in the number of adults in the oldest age group, growing by over 70%.

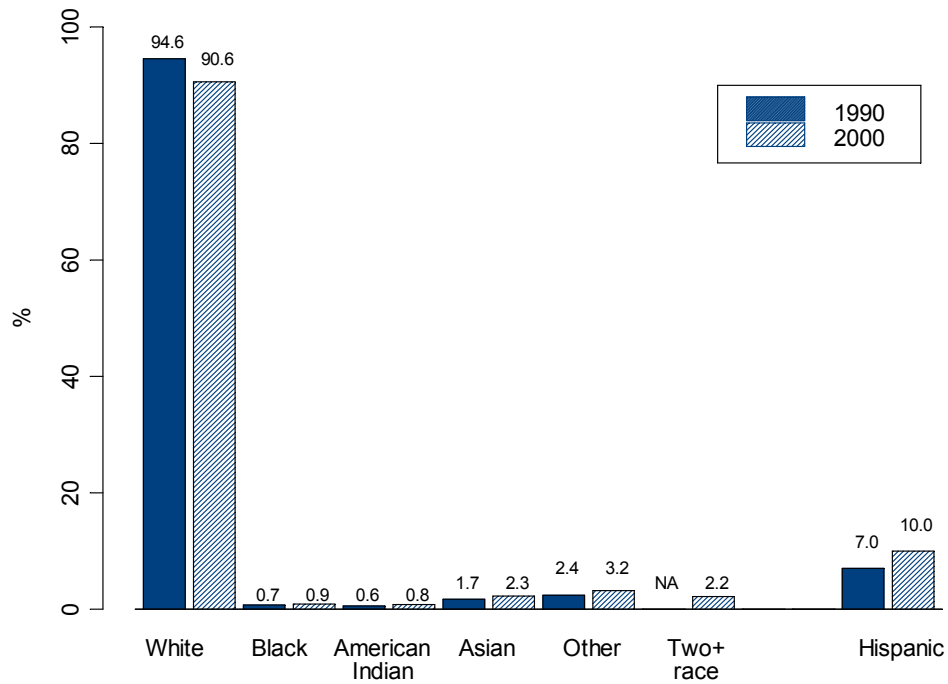
Figure 1.1 Jefferson County population, by age group, 1990 and 2000



Source: JCDHE Epidemiology and Colorado Department of Local Affairs

The racial and ethnic composition of the county also changed between 1990 and 2000. According to data from the U.S. Census Bureau,<sup>3</sup> there were proportionate increases in every minority racial group, as well as an increase in the Hispanic population (Figure 1.2).

Figure 1.2 Jefferson County racial and ethnic composition, by percent, 1990 and 2000



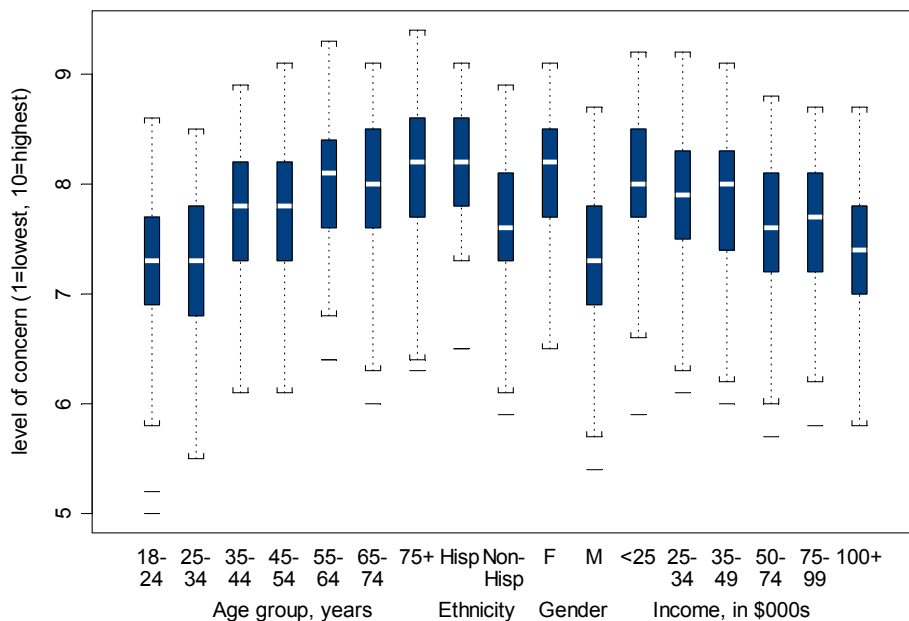
Source: JCDHE Epidemiology and U.S. Census Bureau

## 1.2 Public Health Concerns

A large portion of the data for this community health assessment was compiled from the 2003 Community Health Survey conducted by the Jefferson County Department of Health and Environment. One section of the survey requested respondents to rate their concerns covering a broad range of public health issues such as access to health care, environmental health, social health, substance abuse, communicable diseases and bioterrorism. The level of concern with public health issues varied by age, ethnicity, gender and household income (Figure 1.3)<sup>4</sup>. In particular:

- Increasing age was correlated with increasing levels of concern.
- Levels of concern decreased with increased household income.
- Male and non-Hispanic respondents tended to express lower levels of concern than did female and Hispanic respondents.

Figure 1.3 Level of concern about public health issues by age, ethnicity, gender and income in Jefferson County, 2003



Source: Jefferson County Community Health Survey, 2003

### **1.3 Healthy People 2010 Objectives**

Many of the indicators for measuring the health of Jefferson County residents were drawn from the U.S. Centers for Disease Prevention and Control, National Center for Health Statistics, Healthy People 2010 (HP 2010) Program. Throughout this document, specific HP 2010 objectives are listed for those indicators with Jefferson County data available. For most of these, comparisons with Colorado and the U.S. are also provided. (See Section 10.1 for information on the HP 2010 program.)