UPDATE

A bi-monthly newsletter of the Solano County Health & Social Services Department.

May, 2004
Volume 1, Issue 2

Letter from the Director

Dear Reader:

This edition of **UPDATE** focuses on some of Solano County's most vulnerable residents — children and older adults. Health & Social Services provides a range of important services that are aimed at protecting children and older and dependent adults from abuse or neglect, keeping families healthy and stable and allowing seniors and disabled adults to live as independently as possible.

A look at the data included within this issue shows that referrals for both child and older adult abuse are on the rise. Caseworkers and, when necessary, law enforcement officials, investigate each and every allegation. Although serious cases of severe abuse or neglect occur all too frequently, most investigations — fortunately — either cannot be substantiated or turn out to be situations that, with education and counseling, can be corrected.

In most of the country, the proportion of children is expected to fall in the coming years while the senior population jumps dramatically as the "Baby Boomers" reach 65. Solano County will be a little different. With open space and some of the most affordable housing in the Bay Area, the County is attractive to families with children. As a result, the number of children and adolescents has been growing rapidly and that is expected to continue. At the same time, the senior population is the fastest growing segment of our population and the proportion of the area's population over the age of 65 will increase 50 percent by 2020, increasing from 9.5 percent of the County's total population to 14.2 percent of the total. The good news is that, in general, older residents are living longer and are generally in better health than at any other time in our history. However, growing numbers of seniors have chronic health conditions and associated disabilities and the fastest growing population group — those over the age of 75 — will increasingly require more help from health and human service agencies.

H&SS has an important role to play in protecting the young and the old.

The Child Welfare Services (CWS) division investigates allegations of child abuse and neglect and makes decisions about whether children can safely remain in their own homes. When that is not possible, H&SS works to find temporary and, ultimately, permanent placement for the child. CWS also provides support services to families to enable them to reunify and maintain their children at home.

Older and Disabled Adult Services (ODAS) investigates allegations of abuse and neglect and provides comprehensive support services for older and disabled adults. Many of the services that ODAS provides are directed at helping older and dependent adults remain linked to the community and living in the their own homes. These programs include In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS).

This issue of **UPDATE** highlights both general demographic trends as they relate to the young and the old along with CWS and ODAS service data.

Sincerely,

Patrick O. Duterte

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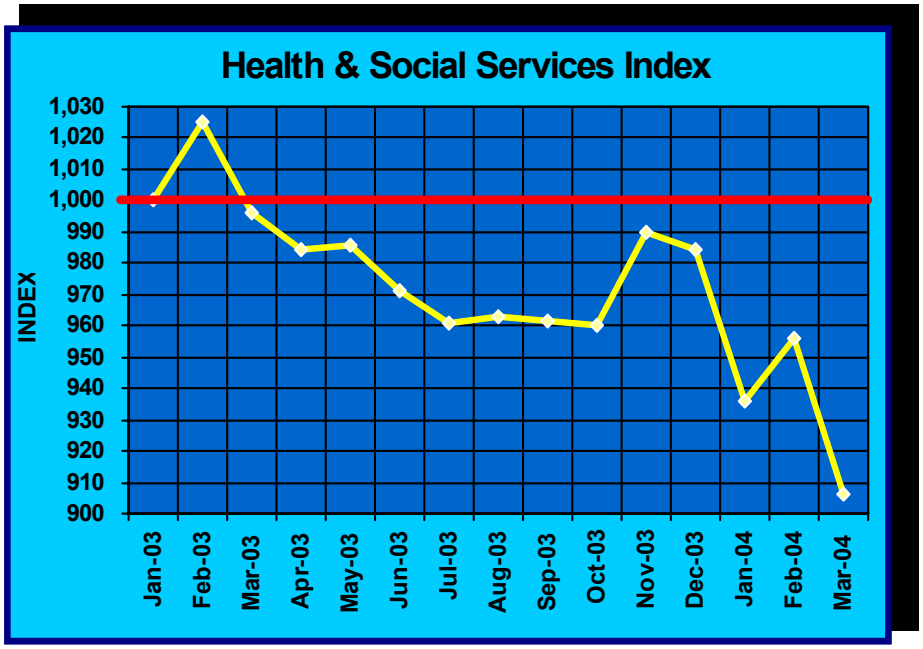


The **Health & Social Services (H&SS) Index** combines workload data from 15 key services provided by H&SS, along with data on unemployment in Solano County, to provide a monthly indicator of community demand for health and social services.

All of the monthly numbers — clients served, program caseloads, number of unemployed, referrals, etc. — are added together and then converted into an index score. The January 2003 total serves as the index bench line figure of 1,000. The index scores for subsequent months reflect change from the January level. Like the Dow Jones or NASDAQ, higher scores suggest positive developments — fewer people looking for work or requiring the services that H&SS provides, for example. Falling numbers suggest increasing need for H&SS's safety net services.

Please note: The index is not a direct measure of need. Many socioeconomic factors influence need. At the same time, various factors, such as eligibility guidelines and available revenues, influence the amount of service that H&SS can provide regardless of need or demand for service.

INDICATOR	Jan-03	Mar-03	May-03	Jul-03	Sep-03	Oct-03	Nov-03	Dec-03	Jan-04	Feb-04	Mar-04
Number Unemployed	13,800	12,800	12,300	13,800	12,100	12,100	11,800	11,300	13,110	12,700	13,300
Number of I&R Calls	2,772	2,555	2,596	2,906	3,029	2,863	2,178	2,446	2,655	1,997	2,520
CalWORKs Cash Assistance Caseload	9,405	9,439	9,794	9,753	9,968	9,932	10,116	10,186	10,402	10,131	10,452
New CalWORKs Applications	385	337	330	403	396	377	394	405	469	357	567
Food Stamp Recipients	11,515	12,261	12,690	12,517	13,106	13,312	13,312	13,357	13,761	13,721	14,389
General Relief Recipients	256	320	323	325	359	383	394	396	385	354	367
Medi-Cal Enrollment	14,327	14,494	14,827	15,198	15,484	15,514	15,414	15,645	15,746	15,885	16,227
CMSP Enrollment	4,228	4,515	4,746	4,794	4,941	5,031	4895	5,013	4,922	5,084	5,266
Elder or Dependent Adult Abuse Referrals	98	115	123	110	90	89	82	97	106	73	95
Elder or Dependent Adult Abuse Confirmed	40	27	35	20	31	26	16	44	36	29	29
In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) Authorized Cases	2,254	2,254	2,226	2,231	2,278	2,277	2,299	2,246	2,237	2,324	2,243
Child Abuse Referrals	390	378	382	324	349	356	313	284	387	394	452
Medical Clinic Visits	2,595	2,752	2,664	2,496	2,721	2,697	2,024	2,319	2,615	2,331	3,025
Dental Clinic Visits	447	431	434	425	379	413	278	289	283	340	401
Mental Health Clients	2,701	2,833	2,793	2,754	2,784	2,681	2,559	2,479	2,756	2,652	2,804
Substance Abuse Clients	699	635	621	529	530	580	510	435	566	567	602

SUCCESS STORY: A Fresh Start

A 30-year-old Vallejo woman came to the attention of CPS last October. She had just been arrested in neighboring Napa County on possession of illegal substances.

During her incarceration, she delivered a healthy baby boy. A Solano County CPS worker was assigned to the case. The CPS worker began meeting with the mother to discuss her situation and options. She agreed to a voluntary foster care placement for her baby until she got out of jail. After that, she agreed to go directly into a residential treatment program with her baby.

Upon her release, she enrolled in the Shamia Recovery Center for women. This program normally lasts a year. She recently graduated from the program ahead of time with honors. Now, she lives in her own apartment in Vallejo and attends Solano Community College. She is 32 hours away from her Associate of Arts Degree in business. She calls the CPS worker at least twice a month to let her know how she and the baby are doing.

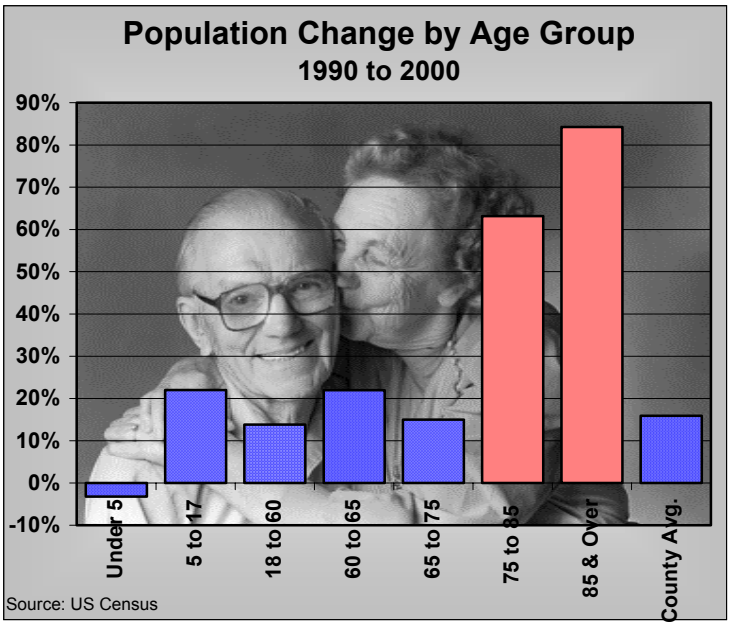
Shamia Recovery Center of Vallejo operates two clean and sober residences for women with problems of substance abuse.

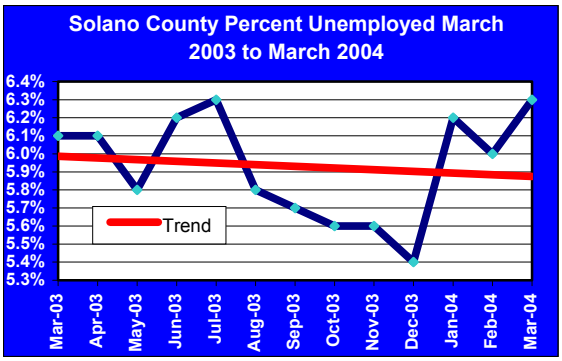
DID YOU KNOW?

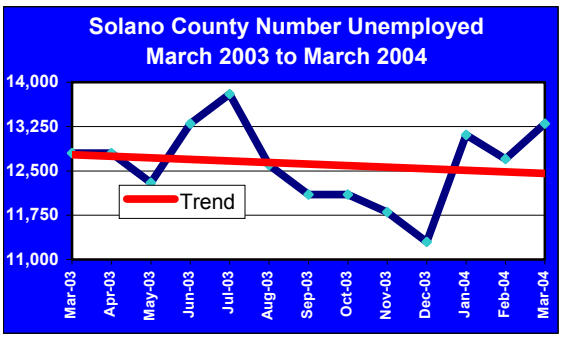
The fastest growing age group in Solano County during the 1990s were those 75 and over. Persons over the age of 75 grew at nearly four times the county average between 1990 and 2000.

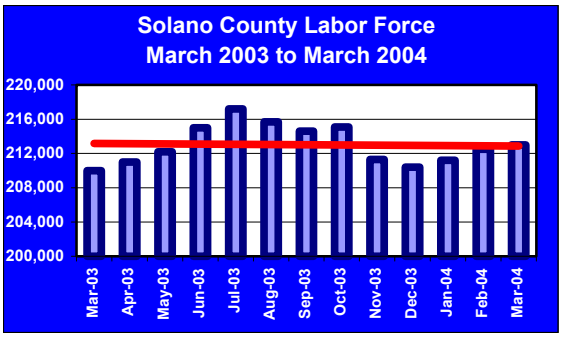
Even so, the very old still represent a small proportion of the County's overall population. But, that percentage is growing. The proportion of the population over the age of 75 increased from 3 percent to 4.5 percent between 1990 and 2000. Actual numbers increased from 10,000 to over just over 17,000.

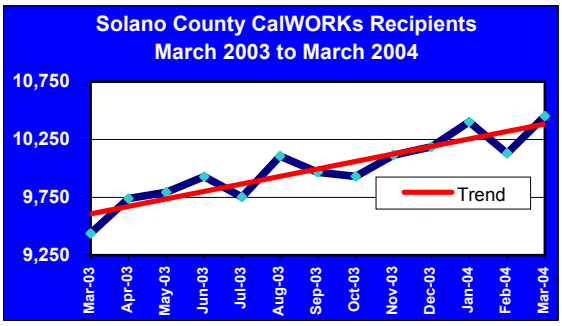
In general, the older a person is, the more frail they are likely to be and therefore in need of more assistance which, in turn, puts them in more danger of abuse or neglect. The elderly are also more likely to live with disability. According to census data, 52 percent of persons 65 and over in Solano County have some kind of disability compared to 15 percent of adults between 21 and 65.

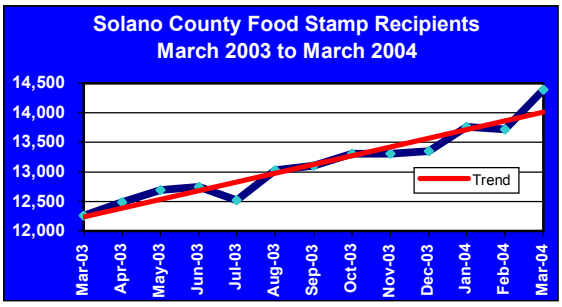












ECONOMY/EMPLOYMENT

- The unemployment rate declined steadily between July, 2003 and December, 2003 before surging upward during the first quarter of 2004.
- The total labor force (those working and those actively seeking work) also generally declined between July and December. This suggests that most of the nearly 1 percentage point decrease in unemployment was due to people giving up on looking for work.
- The labor force has begun to increase since January, perhaps a signal that some individuals are again beginning to look for work.
- An estimated 13,300 people were unemployed in March 2004 — an increase of 500 over March 2003.

PUBLIC ASSISTANCE

- Public assistance programs continued to rise sharply over the past year. There were over 1,000 new CalWORKs cash recipients in March 2004 as compared to March 2003.
- The number of food stamp recipients were 52 percent higher in March 2004 than in March 2003.

CHILD WELFARE

- The rate for substantiated cases of child abuse and neglect has slowly risen in Solano County over the past six years from 4.0 cases per 1,000 children to 4.9.

- Solano County's child abuse and neglect rate is markedly below the state average — 4.9 compared to 8.9 for the state as a whole in 2003 — but the gap has narrowed over the past six years. Solano County's child abuse and neglect rate has been rising while the state's rate has fallen. For 1998, Solano County reported 4.0 cases per 1,000 children compared to 10.9 for California as a whole. By 2003, the Solano rate had risen 22 percent. During the same 1998 to 2003 period, the state's rate dropped 20 percent.

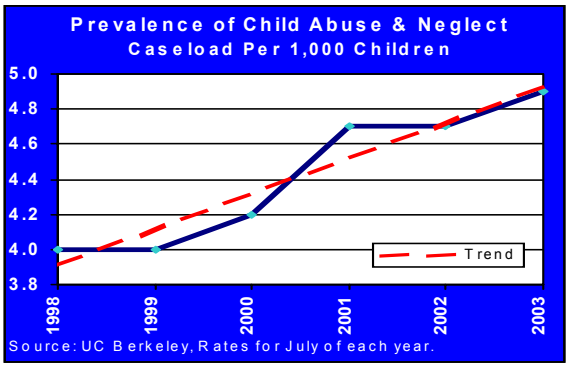
- Over 250 children are placed in foster homes each month on average. The average now appears to be approaching 300. Foster Family Agency (FFA) and group home placements also appear to be increasing markedly over recent years.

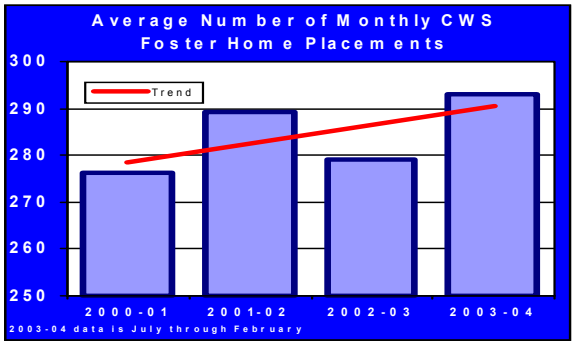
- While small, the number of children aging out of the foster care system has been growing. Among the factors may be that increasing numbers of foster children have been placed in Solano County from other counties in the Bay Area in recent years. An increasing number of these children are now reaching emancipation age (18).

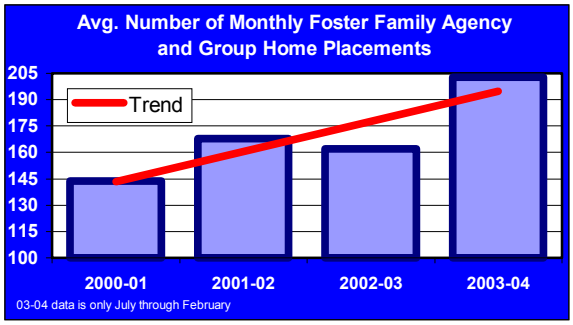
OLDER & DEPENDENT ADULTS

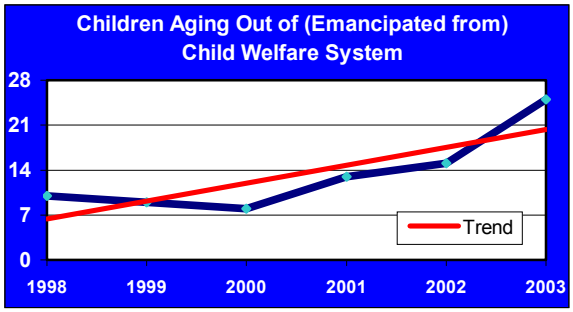
- In general, over one-third of all referrals for elder or dependent adult abuse are substantiated.

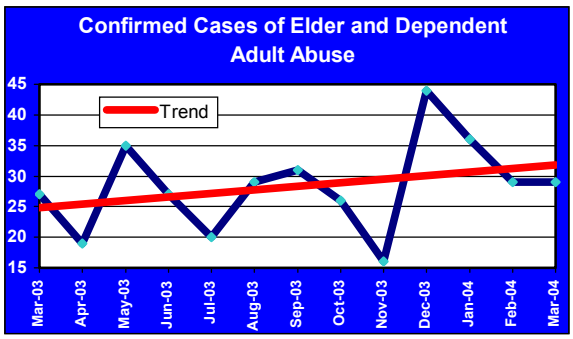
- On average, about three-fourths of confirmed cases of elder or dependent adult abuse are elder abuse or neglect, the remainder involve dependent adults.

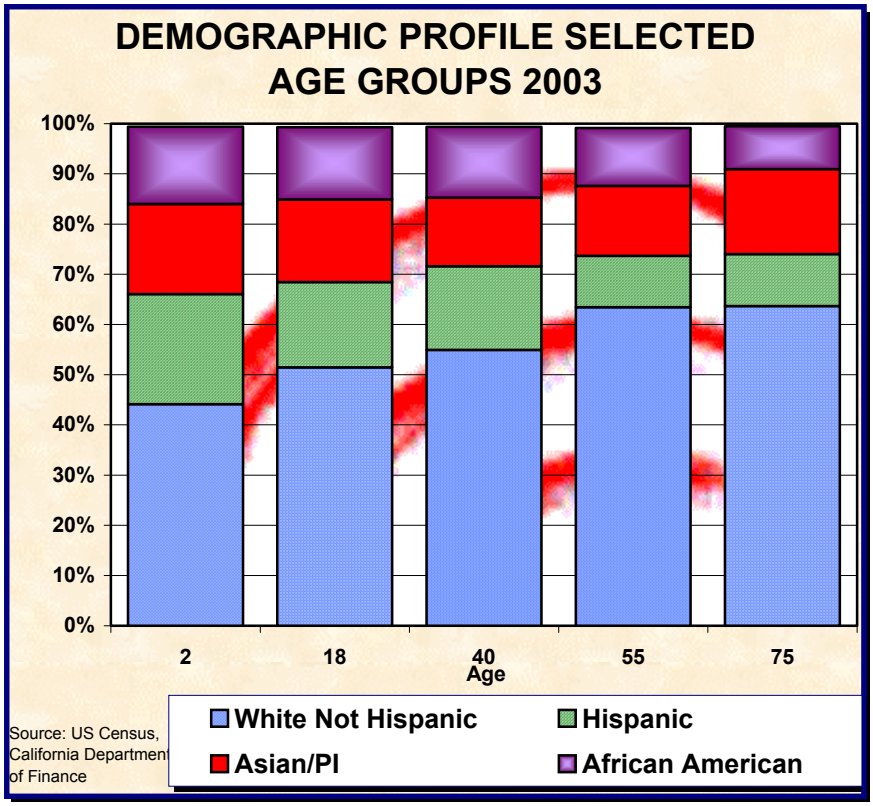










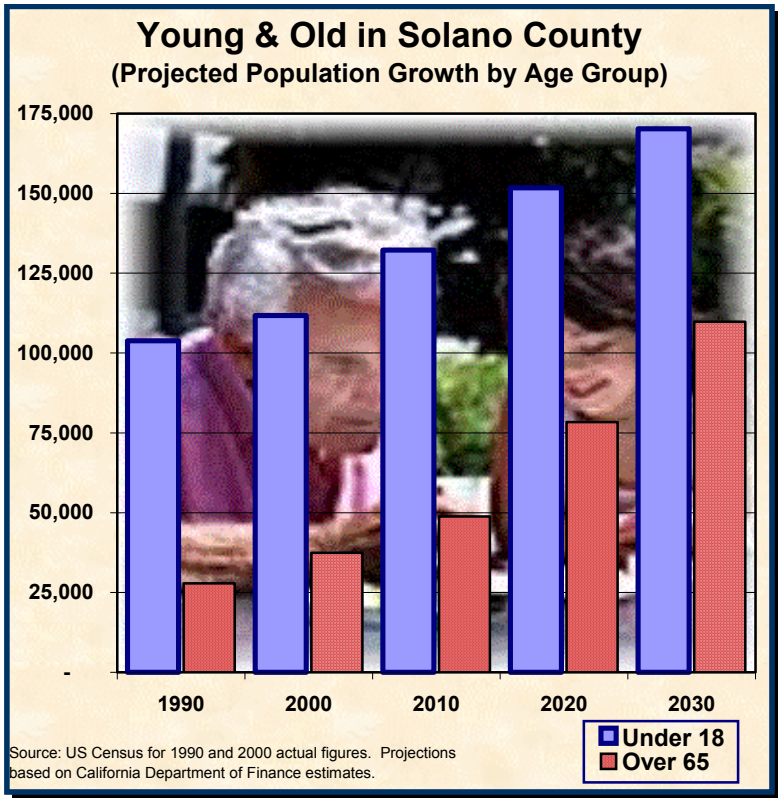


CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS

CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS

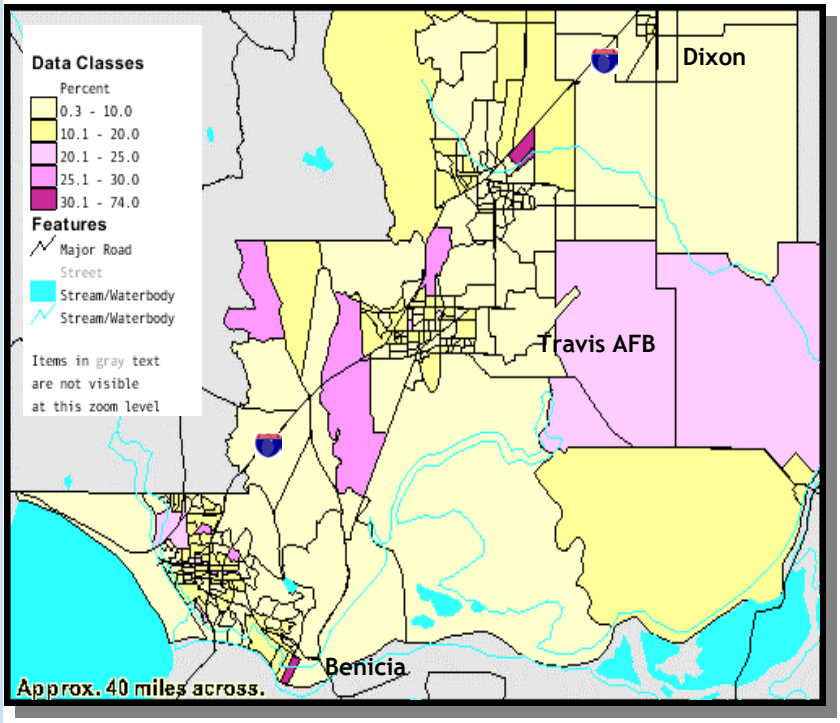
Solano County's population is changing. The County is becoming more diverse. The graph to the left shows the ethnic breakdown from the 2000 census for several ages. Over half of all two-year olds are African American, Asian/Pacific Islander or Hispanic. In contrast, for those who are 55 and 75, two-thirds are non-Hispanic whites.

Both the young and senior populations are projected to grow rapidly over the next 25 years. The senior population is expected to increase dramatically after 2010. There were nearly four times as many children as older adults in Solano County in 1990. By 2030, that ration is expected to fall to 1.5 children for every senior.



CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS

PROPORTION OF POPULATION 65 & OVER

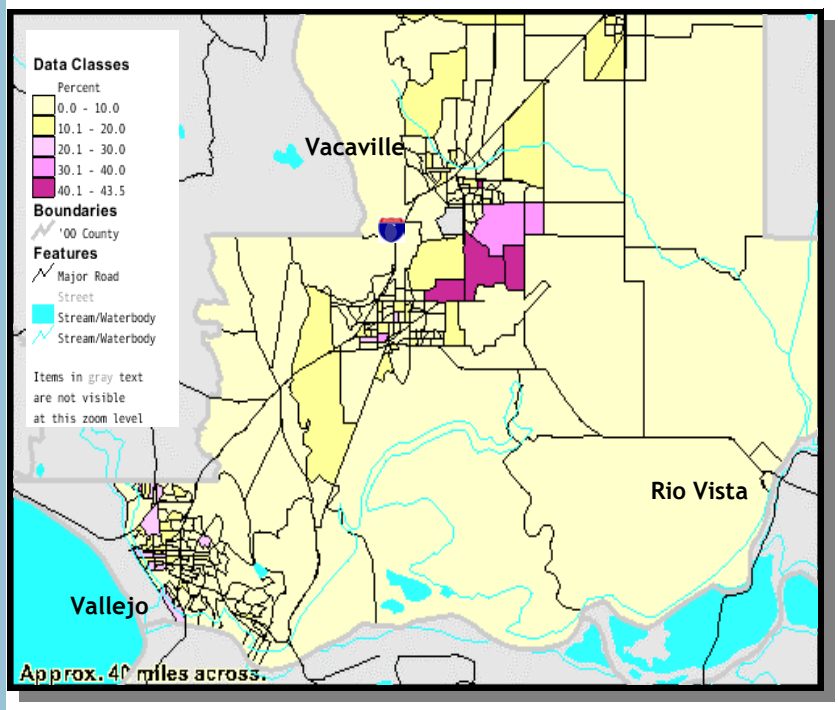


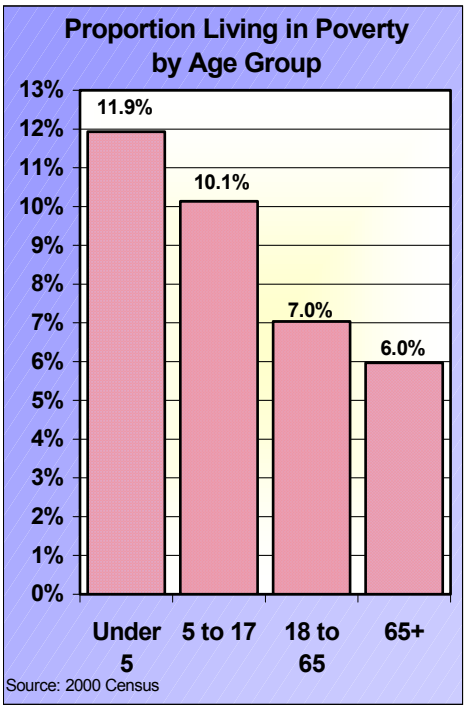
Solano County's senior population is spread throughout the County but there are concentrations in such areas as Leisure Town in Vacaville and in the rural areas.

Seniors are less likely to live in poverty than younger age groups. Children are twice as likely to live in poverty as seniors.

Certain areas do have higher concentrations of poor elderly. These include some of the older central city neighborhoods of Vallejo and Fairfield and areas near Travis Air Force Base.

PROPORTION OF 65 & OVER POPULATION LIVING IN POVERTY

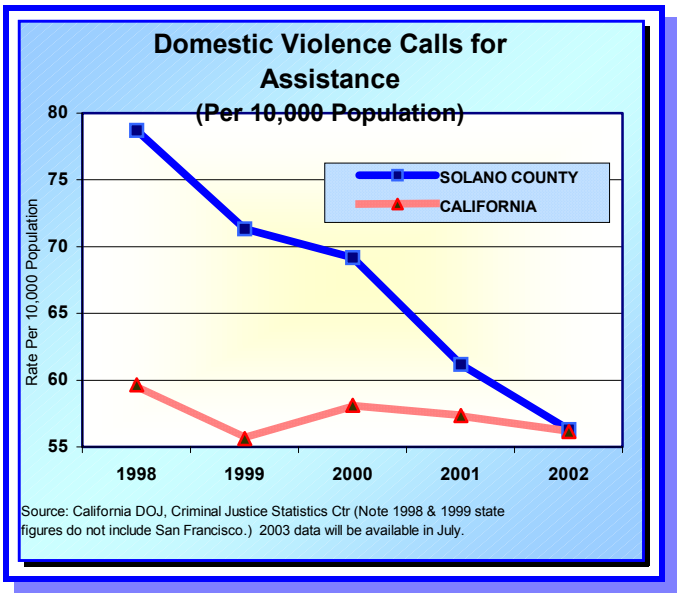




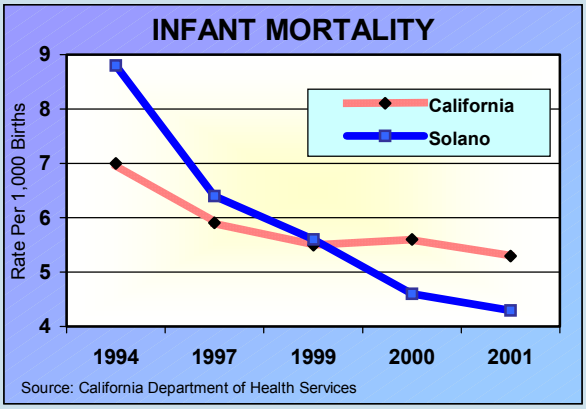
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

H&SS plays a supporting role in addressing domestic violence. The County's Family Prevention Violence Office — part of the County Administrator's Office — is the lead agency for coordinating activities directed at stopping and preventing domestic violence. When substance abuse or mental health issues are involved, H&SS provides the necessary support. Both Public Health and Employment & Eligibility personnel screen for signs of family violence. When child abuse is also involved, Child Welfare Services is brought into the case.

- In 2002, over 2,300 calls for assistance relating to incidents of domestic violence were reported to Solano County law enforcement agencies. Although down from over 3,000 calls in 1998, the number still represented an **average of 6 calls per day**.
- The County's domestic violence rate - based on calls for assistance per 10,000 population - fell from 80 per 10,000 in 1998 to 56 in 2002. In 1998, the County's rate was 30 percent higher than for California as a whole. By 2002, the Solano County rate was the same as for the State.



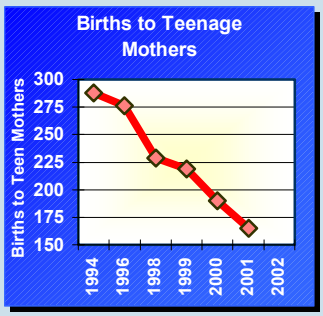
INFANT MORTALITY



INFANT MORTALITY BY ETHNIC GROUP	1994	2001	% Change
Asian/PI	7.0	-	-100%
White/ Other	9.0	3.3	-64%
County Avg.	8.6	4.1	-52%
Hispanic	2.6	5.4	107%
African American	16.3	9.7	-41%

INFANT MORTALITY

Infant mortality is often considered an indicator of the overall health of a community. It is related to a number of social and economic factors.

The dramatic decrease in Infant mortality is one of Solano County's most visible successes. In the mid-90s, Solano County's infant mortality rate was 25% higher than for the state as a whole. By 2001 — the most recent year available — the County's infant mortality rate was 20% less than the statewide average. Among possible contributing factors: A decrease in births to teenage mothers (Accompanying Graph), the County's high proportion of insured and the success of the Black Infant Health Program.

Infant mortality for African Americans in Solano County fell from 16.3 per 1,000 births in 1994 to 9.6 in 2001. During the same period, the infant mortality rate among Hispanics doubled.