

PRIORITY SETTING EXERCISE
(A Customization of the Simplex Method)

When comparing health problems consider, by major topic area, the following:

- *Size of the problem: if more people are affected, it may be of higher priority.
- *Seriousness of the problem: a problem with a high death rate may be of higher priority than a problem with no life-threatening consequences.
- *Are there effective interventions available to address the health problem? Can the intervention be implemented quickly and simply for an effective outcome?
- *Can the problem be addressed through a health program? Are there other systems that are more effective for intervention?
- *Does it make economic sense to address the problem? Are there economic consequences if a program is not carried out?
- *Will the community accept a program? Is it wanted? Is funding available or potentially available for a program?
- *Do current laws allow program activities to be implemented?

HOW TO USE THE ENCLOSED TOOL:

1. Beginning at the top of each column on worksheet #1, compare each pair of health problems listed while asking yourself, "If I could choose only one health problem, on which should our county focus first?" For instance, under column 1, problems 1-2, should "chronic disease" have priority over "substance abuse"? Circle the number corresponding to your choice.
2. Continuing down each column, compare issues and choose one of the two options noted.
3. Count the number of times each number was circled on worksheet #1, and fill in the blanks next to the corresponding number on worksheet #2.

WORKSHEET #1

**This exercise was adapted from the Thurston County Public Health and Social Services Department, WA*

CIRCLE THE NUMBER CORRESPONDING TO YOUR FIRST CHOICE IN EACH PAIR

Col 1	Col 2	Col 3	Col 4	Col 5	Col 6	Col 7	Col 8	Col 9	Col 10	Col 11	Col 12	Col 13	Col 14
1-2													
1-3	2-3												
1-4	2-4	3-4											
1-5	2-5	3-5	4-5										
1-6	2-6	3-6	4-6	5-6									
1-7	2-7	3-7	4-7	5-7	6-7								
1-8	2-8	3-8	4-8	5-8	6-8	7-8							
1-9	2-9	3-9	4-9	5-9	6-9	7-9	8-9						
1-10	2-10	3-10	4-1	5-10	6-10	7-10	8-10	9-10					
1-11	2-11	3-11	4-11	5-11	6-11	7-11	8-11	9-11	10-11				
1-12	2-12	3-12	4-12	5-12	6-12	7-12	8-12	9-12	10-12	11-12			
1-13	2-13	3-13	4-13	5-13	6-13	7-13	8-13	9-13	10-13	11-13	12-13		
1-14	2-14	3-14	4-14	5-14	6-14	7-14	8-14	9-14	10-14	11-14	12-14	13-14	
1-15	2-15	3-15	4-15	5-15	6-15	7-15	8-15	9-15	10-15	11-15	12-15	13-15	14-15

WORKSHEET #2

TOTAL NUMBER OF TIMES EACH NUMBER IS CIRCLED

_____ #1. Chronic Disease

_____ #2. Substance Dependence

_____ #3. Mental Health

_____ #4. Dental

_____ #5. Infectious Diseases

_____ #6. Prenatal Care

_____ #7. Teenage Pregnancy

_____ #8. Health Education

_____ #9. Unintentional Injury

_____ #10. Nutrition

_____ #11. Violence

_____ #12. Lack of Family Strengths

_____ #13. Water Contamination

_____ #14. Air Quality

_____ #15. Food Safety