



## History of RRFSS

**The Rapid Risk Factor Surveillance System (RRFSS) began in 1999 as a pilot telephone survey of adults aged 18 years and older in Durham Region. The pilot project was a joint partnership between Health Canada, the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Cancer Care Ontario and the Durham Region Health Department. The idea was to pilot test a risk factor survey based on the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) used in each state in the U.S.A.**

**The survey was administered by the Institute for Social Research (ISR) at York University on behalf of the partners. From June to October 1999, a random sample of approximately 200 Durham Region residents was surveyed each month. Respondents were asked about various lifestyle behaviours associated with cancer, heart disease and injuries, in particular behaviours such as smoking, sun safety, and fruit and vegetable consumption that are targeted by public health programs. The overall response rate was 69%.**

**Following the successful pilot project, the Durham Region Health Department decided to continue with RRFSS and was soon joined by the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit and the Simcoe County District Health Unit. These three health units formed the RRFSS Working Group. In 2000, the RRFSS Working Group reviewed and revised the questionnaire.**

**The Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care funded the Durham Region Health Department and the RRFSS Working Group to document additional aspects of RRFSS in the context of all Ontario health units. The Central East Health Information Partnership (CEHIP) supported RRFSS by developing the prototype for the automated web-based reporting of RRFSS results.**

**By the end of 2000, 3 more health units had joined the RRFSS Working Group; Region of Peel Health Services, Middlesex-London Health Unit and Niagara Regional Public Health Department. In January 2001, the next cycle of RRFSS began. Interest in RRFSS has continued to grow and since 2001, twenty-nine Health Units have participated in RRFSS, which continues to be the 'TOP DOG' of health surveillance in Ontario.**