

## **TOP TEN LIST**

### **TEN BEST WAYS TO ENSURE A BAD HEALTH DATA MAP**

With apologies to David Letterman, and thanks to my colleagues and associates around the country, including Linda Pickle (NCHS), Geoff Jacquez (Biomedware), Phil Klein (WI DHFS) and others.

**R.S. Kirby, August 1998**

### **Number 10**

**Select colors that are indistinguishable from one another by the color blind.**

## **Number 9**

**Classify data values according to preconceived notions of patterns and trends; utilize standards from the literature or statistical methods only as a last resort.**



## **Number 8**

**Use symbols or pie charts (instead of area shading or contour lines) for maps with many areal units (e.g. US counties).**



## **Number 7**

**Use colors with connotations that are counterintuitive (e.g. red for low, blue for high).**



## **Number 6**

**Place all available overlays (roads, wellheads, highways, pipelines, zoning patterns, ZIP Code boundaries, rivers and lakes, etc) on the health data map, regardless of whether they have anything to do with the disease or health outcome.**



## **Number 5**

**When mapping areal units as three-dimensional polygons (prism map), orient the map so that areas with the largest values are in front to block the view of other areas.**

## **Number 4**

**Read nothing; ignore especially all books and articles by Mark Monmonier, Edward Tufte, Howard Wainer, Alan MacEachren and Phil Muehrcke.**

## **Number 3**

**If you have access to a medical geographer, ignore her. If you can involve a spatial analyst or cartographer in your project, do so at your own peril! Collaboration with such specialists can only strengthen your research design and methods of data presentation and should be avoided at all cost!**

## **Number 2**

**Ignore all research results regarding the psychology of perception concerning cartography and map interpretation; better yet, be completely unaware that this field of intellectual inquiry even exists.**

## **Number 1**

**Use the default settings for map creation in your favorite GIS or mapping software package.**

