



Research Brief

The Commonwealth's Official Source for Population and Economic Statistics

October 1, 2003

U.S. Census Bureau Releases Report on Health Insurance Coverage

MIDDLETOWN, Pa – The U.S. Census Bureau today released its annual report on health insurance coverage. This report was compiled from responses to the Current Population Survey (CPS) conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau. The Current Population Survey is a monthly survey that has been conducted for more than 50 years.

For the first time in 2003, CPS respondents could identify themselves in more than one racial group. In previous surveys, respondents could only choose one racial group. This report compares 2001 single-race data with two different sets of race data for 2002: one comparison based on those who reported only one race and another comparison based on those who reported more than one race. This report provides year-to-year comparisons for each racial group except American Indians and Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders, because the sample was not sufficiently large.

The two-year average percent of people without health insurance coverage for the entire year was 14.4 percent from 2000-2001 and increased to 14.9 percent from 2001-2002. In Pennsylvania, the two-year average percent was 9.0 from 2000-2001 and increased to 10.3 percent from 2001-2002. The average percent in the commonwealth remained below the national average but did show a higher percentage increase between the two time periods.

At the national level, the report describes other findings such as:

- The overall percent of the population without health insurance rose in 2002, the second consecutive annual increase. An estimated 15.2 percent of the population (43.6 million persons) were without health insurance for the entire year of 2002, up from 14.6 percent in 2001, an increase of 2.4 million people.
- The number and percentage of persons covered by employment-based health insurance dropped from 62.6 percent to 61.3 percent in 2002, driving the overall decrease in covered persons.
- The number and percentage of persons covered by medicaid increased from 11.2 percent to 11.6 percent in 2002. This increase was primarily responsible for the increase in the number and percentage of people covered by government health insurance programs.

- The proportion of children without health insurance (11.6 percent) did not change in 2002. Neither did the percentage of the persons in poverty without health insurance coverage (30.4 percent) in 2002.
- Hispanics (67.6 percent) were less likely to be covered by health insurance than non-Hispanic whites who reported a single race (89.3 percent), Blacks who reported a single race (79.8 percent) and Asians who reported a single race (81.6 percent) in 2002.
- Young adults (70.4 percent), 18 to 24 years old, were the least likely age group to have health insurance coverage in 2002, compared with persons 25 to 64 years old (82.0 percent) and persons 65 years or older (99.2 percent).

For additional information, please contact the Pennsylvania State Data Center's State Capital Office at 717.772.2710. To view the complete report on health insurance coverage, please visit the PaSDC's website at <http://PaSDC.hbg.psu.edu>.

The Pennsylvania State Data Center is the commonwealth's official source of population and economic statistics. It is based at Penn State Harrisburg's Institute of State and Regional Affairs. The Pennsylvania State Data Center is part of the U.S. Census Bureau's National State Data Center Program.

Editors: For additional data, contact the Pennsylvania State Data Center's State Capital Office at 717.772.2710 or for faculty comment on this topic, contact Penn State Harrisburg's Public Information Office at 717.948.6029.