

AHRQ Analyses of MEPS Data Inform HHS Report on Declining Employer-Sponsored Insurance Coverage

Estimates of the health insurance status of the U.S. civilian noninstitutionalized population are critical to policymakers and others concerned with access to medical care and the cost and quality of that care. Health insurance helps people get timely access to medical care and protects them against the risk of expensive and unanticipated medical events. Any gap in insurance coverage can bring financial disaster and have negative health consequences.

When estimating the size of the uninsured population, it is important to consider the distinction between those uninsured for short periods of time and those who are uninsured for several years. Studies that examine the trends in health insurance coverage over time are essential to help discern the factors most likely to drive health insurance insecurity. A recent report released by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) provides detailed estimates of trends in employer sponsored health insurance coverage over time.

This report documents the fact that coverage gaps are common across all categories of Americans, regardless of income, employment status, age, race/ethnicity, and health status. A full 32 percent of working age adults and their families had a gap in health insurance coverage for at least one month in 2006 and 2007. The report made use of analyses performed by staff of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) based on Medical Expenditure Panel Survey (MEPS) data.

The report is available at
<http://www.healthreform.gov/reports/insurance/insuranceinsecuritypdf.pdf>

More detailed tabulations provided in response to this topic are available upon request.

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Response from:	Steven B. Cohen, Ph.D., Director, CFACT Joel W. Cohen, Ph.D., Director, Division of Social and Economic Research, CFACT
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