

HEALTH COVERAGE IN IOWA

A Continuing Problem of Access for Many Thousands of Iowans

New data released Aug. 29 by the U.S. Census illustrate critical issues of health-care coverage for Iowans. Key figures from the new information:

NO HEALTH INSURANCE FOR 1 IN 11 IOWANS

- Using two-year averages to ensure accuracy,* Iowa in 2004-05 had 264,500 uninsured — 9.1 percent of the population.
- While a significant decline from the 10.4 percent uninsured in 2003-04, Iowa's uninsurance rate *has not improved from the start of the decade*. This measure is statistically the same from 2000-01.

FEWER IOWANS HAVE PRIVATE-SECTOR COVERAGE

- About 68,000 fewer Iowans have health coverage through their employer than they did four years earlier — 1,986,000 in 2000-01, vs. 1,918,500 in 2004-05.
- As a percentage of Iowans, this is a drop from 69.5 percent to 66 percent in four years.
- Iowans losing employment-based coverage do not appear to be finding a private-sector alternative. The number of Iowans directly purchasing a private health-insurance plan fell from 479,500 in 2000-01 (16.8 percent) to 425,000 in 2004-05 (14.6 percent).

MORE IOWANS FIND HEALTH-CARE COVERAGE THROUGH GOVERNMENT

- The number of Iowans with government health-care coverage (Medicaid, *hawk-i*, Medicare and military, for example) has risen from 639,000 in 2000-01, to 747,000 in 2004-05, or by 108,000.
- As a percentage of Iowans, this is an increase from 22.4 percent to 25.7 percent from the start of the decade.

HOW IOWA COMPARES TO OTHER STATES

- Using a three-year average to assure accurate comparisons between states (2003-05), only two states — Hawaii and Minnesota — had a lower rate of uninsured residents than Iowa.
- Among Iowa's neighbors, only Minnesota, at 8.7 percent, had a smaller proportion of its population without health insurance. Texas had the highest percentage of uninsured residents — 24.6 percent. The average uninsured rate for the United States was 15.7 percent.
- In addition to Iowa, only two other states (Idaho and New York) saw a significant one-year decline in the uninsured rate between 2003-04 and 2004-05.
- Iowa is one of 19 states that saw no change in the uninsured rate from five years ago (2000-01 to 2004-05). Only one state (New York) saw a significant five-year decline in the uninsured rate. The rest of the states saw a significant increase in the uninsured rate.

* Two-year averages are considered more reliable than one-year figures.

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