

Sources of Health Insurance and Characteristics of the Uninsured: Analysis of the March 2006 Current Population Survey

By Paul Fronstin, EBRI

- This *Issue Brief* provides historic data through 2005 on the number and percentage of nonelderly individuals with and without health insurance. Based on EBRI estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau's March 2006 Current Population Survey (CPS), it reflects 2005 data. It also discusses trends in coverage for the 1994–2005 period and highlights characteristics that typically indicate whether an individual is insured.
- **Health Coverage Continues Decline:** The percentage of the nonelderly population (under age 65) with health insurance coverage declined in 2005 to a post-1994 low of 82.1 percent. Declines in health insurance coverage have been recorded in all but three years since 1994, when 36.5 million nonelderly individuals were uninsured; in 2006, the uninsured population was 46.1 million.
- **Employment-Based Coverage Remains Dominant Source of Health Coverage:** The segment of the U.S. population with employment-based health coverage dropped from 64.4 percent in 1994 to 62.0 percent in 2005, though in the years between 1994 and 2000, the percentage of the nonelderly population with employment-based coverage expanded. Employment-based health benefits remain by far the most common form of health coverage in the United States.
- **Public Program Coverage Is Stable:** Public-sector health coverage was unchanged as a percentage of the population in 2005, accounting for 17.7 percent of the nonelderly population. Enrollment in Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program remained at 34.7 million in 2005, and covers 13.5 percent of the nonelderly population, which is significantly above the 10.5 percent level of 1999 but not much above the 12.7 percent level of 1994.
- **Individual Coverage Stable:** Individually purchased health coverage was unchanged in 2005 and has basically hovered in the high 6 percent and low 7 percent range since 1994.
- **Private- vs. Public-Coverage Trends Reversing:** Health insurance coverage has generally not sustained unbroken trends since 1994. There were crosscurrents: Employment-based coverage expanded significantly in the 1994–2000 period to exceed the growth in public programs. Subsequently, the dynamic reversed, as public programs expanded while employment-based coverage declined. 2005 may be the beginning of new trend that could take the form of erosion in employment-based coverage that is not offset by expansions in public programs, thus leading to long-term growth in the uninsured.

Paul Fronstin is director of the Health Research and Education Program at the Employee Benefit Research Institute (EBRI). This *Issue Brief* was written with assistance from the Institute’s research and editorial staffs. Any views expressed in this report are those of the author and should not be ascribed to the officers, trustees, or other sponsors of EBRI, EBRI-ERF, or their staffs. Neither EBRI nor EBRI-ERF lobbies or takes positions on specific policy proposals. EBRI invites comment on this research.

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Introduction

Continuing a long-term trend that has occurred during most years since 1994, the percentage of nonelderly individuals in the United States with health insurance declined slightly between 2004 and 2005: 82.1 percent of individuals were covered in 2005, down from 84.1 percent in 1994 (calculated from Figure 1). More than 210 million nonelderly individuals (under age 65) had insurance coverage in 2005, while 46.1 million were uninsured. The number of uninsured increased from 44.8 million in 2004. The percentage of nonelderly individuals without health insurance coverage was 17.9 percent in 2005, up slightly from 17.6 percent in 2004 (Figure 1).

The percentage of uninsured individuals in the United States increased in 2005 because slightly fewer workers and their families were covered by employment-based health benefits. The percentage of nonelderly individuals covered by employment-based health benefits declined from 62.4 percent in 2004 to 62.0 percent in 2005 (Figure 1). Employment-based health benefits are still by far the dominant source of health coverage in the United States for the population under age 65, providing coverage for nearly 160 million people under age 65.

While the majority of individuals insured in 2005 received coverage through an employment-based health plan, 45.5 million, or 17.7 percent of the nonelderly population, were covered by public programs, and an additional 17.8 million, or 6.9 percent, purchased policies directly from an insurer. Nearly 35 million nonelderly individuals participated in the Medicaid or State Children's Health Insurance Program (S-CHIP),¹ and 7.7 million received their health insurance through the Tricare and CHAMPVA² programs and other government programs for retired military and their families.

Figure 1
Nonelderly Population With Selected Sources of Health Insurance Coverage, 1994–2005

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
	(millions)											
Total	229.9	231.9	234.0	236.2	238.6	240.7	245.1	247.5	250.8	252.7	255.1	257.4
Employment-Based Coverage	148.1	149.7	151.7	153.6	156.7	160.3	163.8	162.3	161.0	159.2	159.2	159.5
Own name	76.3	76.9	78.0	78.5	80.2	81.4	84.6	84.1	82.5	81.5	81.7	82.4
Dependent coverage	71.9	72.8	73.7	75.1	76.5	78.9	79.1	78.2	78.5	77.8	77.5	77.2
Individually Purchased	17.3	16.8	16.8	16.6	16.3	16.6	16.1	16.4	16.8	17.0	17.9	17.8
Public	39.4	38.8	37.8	35.3	34.6	34.5	35.8	37.9	40.0	42.5	45.0	45.5
Medicare	3.7	4.1	4.6	4.7	4.8	4.9	5.4	5.6	5.8	6.2	6.3	6.5
Medicaid	29.1	29.4	28.6	26.4	25.2	25.3	26.2	28.3	29.9	32.4	34.6	34.7
Tricare/CHAMPVA ^a	8.7	7.5	6.9	6.6	6.9	6.6	6.8	6.6	6.9	6.9	7.3	7.7
No Health Insurance	36.5	37.3	38.3	39.9	40.7	39.0	39.6	40.9	43.3	44.7	44.8	46.1
	(percentage)											
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Employment-Based Coverage	64.4	64.6	64.8	65.0	65.7	66.6	66.8	65.6	64.2	63.0	62.4	62.0
Own name	33.2	33.2	33.3	33.2	33.6	33.8	34.5	34.0	32.9	32.2	32.0	32.0
Dependent coverage	31.3	31.4	31.5	31.8	32.1	32.8	32.3	31.6	31.3	30.8	30.4	30.0
Individually Purchased	7.5	7.2	7.2	7.0	6.8	6.9	6.6	6.6	6.7	6.7	7.0	6.9
Public	17.1	16.7	16.2	15.0	14.5	14.3	14.6	15.3	15.9	16.8	17.6	17.7
Medicare	1.6	1.8	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.2	2.3	2.3	2.5	2.5	2.5
Medicaid	12.7	12.7	12.2	11.2	10.6	10.5	10.7	11.4	11.9	12.8	13.6	13.5
Tricare/CHAMPVA ^a	3.8	3.2	2.9	2.8	2.9	2.7	2.8	2.7	2.8	2.7	2.9	3.0
No Health Insurance	15.9	16.1	16.4	16.9	17.0	16.2	16.1	16.5	17.3	17.7	17.6	17.9

Source: Employee Benefit Research Institute estimates of the Current Population Survey, March 1995–2006 Supplements.

Note: Details may not add to totals because individuals may receive coverage from more than one source.

^a TRICARE (formerly known as CHAMPUS) is a program administered by the Department of Defense for military retirees as well as families of active duty, retired, and deceased service members. CHAMPVA, the Civilian Health and Medical Program for the Department of Veterans Affairs, is a health care benefits program for disabled dependents of veterans and certain survivors of veterans.

This *Issue Brief* examines the status of health insurance coverage in the United States. The data are based primarily on the March 2006 Current Population Survey (CPS), with some analysis based on other Census surveys.³ The report focuses on the nonelderly population (under age 65) because this group can receive health insurance coverage from a number of different sources. The estimates presented in this report differ from those published by the Census Bureau because the focus here is solely on the nonelderly. The nonelderly population is the focus of this report because Medicare covers nearly all of the elderly population. As a result of this difference between EBRI and Census Bureau estimates, this report shows a higher percentage of uninsured in the United States.

The next section of the report discusses recent trends in health insurance coverage and some of their causes. The following section discusses the determinants of having employment-based or other types of health insurance coverage. The section after that discusses the uninsured population and the factors associated with being uninsured, and is followed by a section examining policy implications. The final section presents conclusions. Data sources are discussed in the appendix.

Trends

While the overall percentage of individuals in the United States without health insurance coverage has increased since 1994, the periods before and after 2000 should be examined separately. Before 2000, the United States experienced an erosion of public coverage. The percentage of the nonelderly population covered by Medicaid declined from 12.9 percent in 1994 to 10.5 percent in 1999, and then started to rebound in 2000. The decline in Medicaid coverage was in large part the result of former welfare recipients entering the work force during the then-thriving economy.⁴ Similarly, the percentage of nonelderly individuals covered by Tricare or CHAMPVA declined from 3.8 percent to 2.8 percent between 1994 and 2000, in large part due to downsizing in the military. During this same time period, the percentage of nonelderly individuals covered by employment-based health benefits increased. In 1994, 64.4 percent of the nonelderly population had employment-based health benefits. By 2000, 66.8 percent were covered. Overall, the decline in public coverage was greater than the expansion in employment-based health benefits during 1994–1998. As a result, the percentage of individuals without health insurance coverage increased.

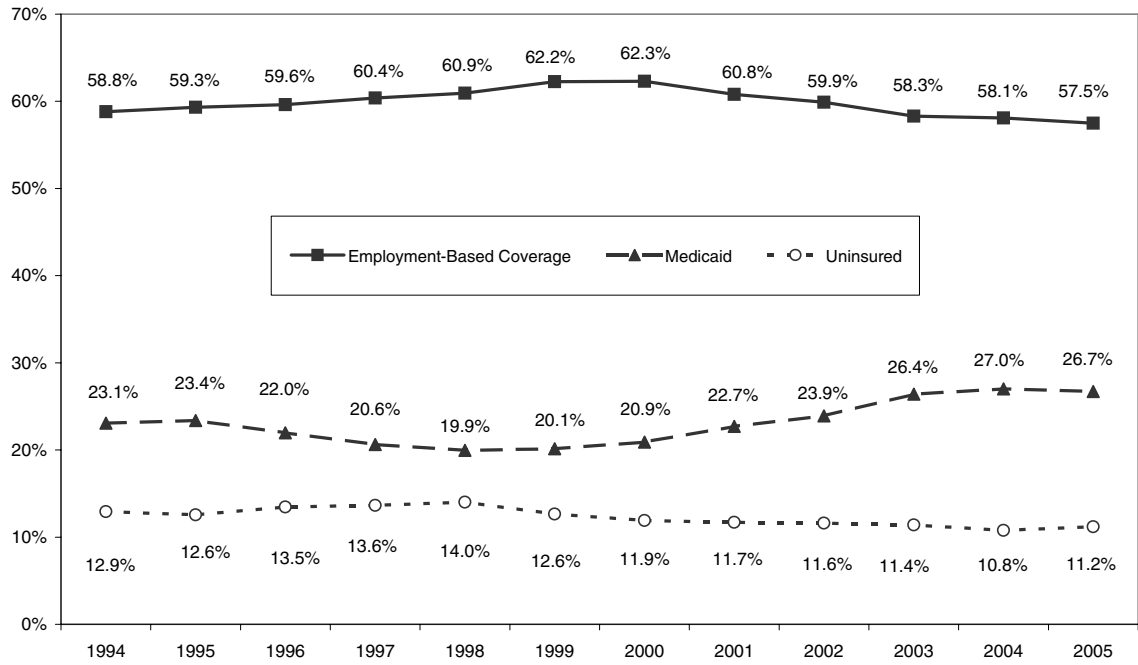
During 1998–2000, however, the expansion in employment-based health benefits was large enough to offset the continued decline in public coverage. As a result, the percentage of individuals without health insurance coverage declined.

These trends, however, mask other important differences among various groups in the U.S. population. For example, the increase in employment-based health benefits was limited to children between 1994 and 1997; during that period, the percentage of children covered by an employment-based health plan increased from 58.8 percent to 60.4 percent (Figure 2), while for adults it was virtually unchanged (Figure 3). However, between 1997 and 2000, the percentage of adults with employment-based health benefits increased from 67.1 percent to 68.7 percent (Figure 3).

Fronstin (1999b) has shown why the likelihood of a child being covered by employment-based health benefits increased. The study found that the percentage of children with a working parent increased, the percentage of children in families with incomes below the poverty level decreased, and more children had a working parent employed in a large firm. The increase in employment-based coverage among children during this period (1994–2000) can in part be attributed to an increase in the number of adult women working. Figure 4 shows how the percentage of women ages 18–45 in families receiving public assistance or welfare income declined, while employment increased.

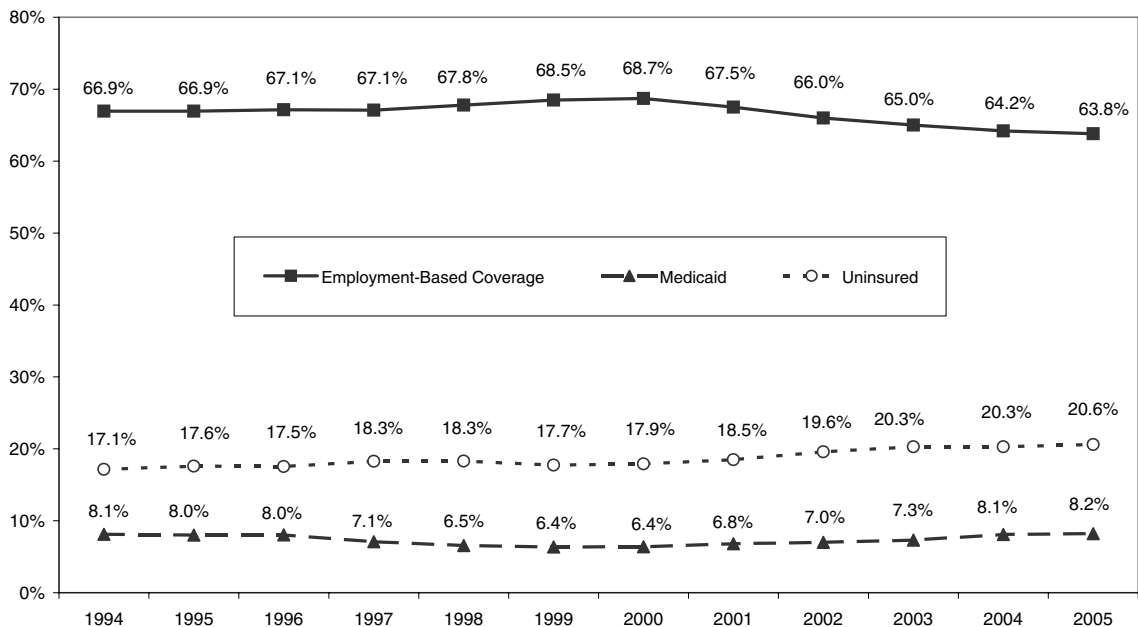
Between 1994 and 1997, the percentage of working adults with employment-based health benefits held steady at roughly 73 percent (Figure 5). During this period, the cost of providing health benefits to employees was flat. However, between 1997 and 2000, the percentage of working adults with employment-based health insurance increased from 73.1 percent to 74.4 percent. This occurred in part because the percentage of small firms offering health benefits increased (Gabel et al., 2001), despite the rising cost of health benefits, especially among small firms (Figure 6). It is also likely that the changing composition of the labor force accounted for some of the increase in the percentage of workers covered by employment-based health benefits. For example, the percentage of workers who were self-employed declined between 1997 and 2000, as did the percentage of workers employed on a part-time basis (Figure 7).

Figure 2
Percentage of Children Under Age 18 With Employment-Based Health Benefits, Medicaid, and Without Health Insurance, 1994–2005



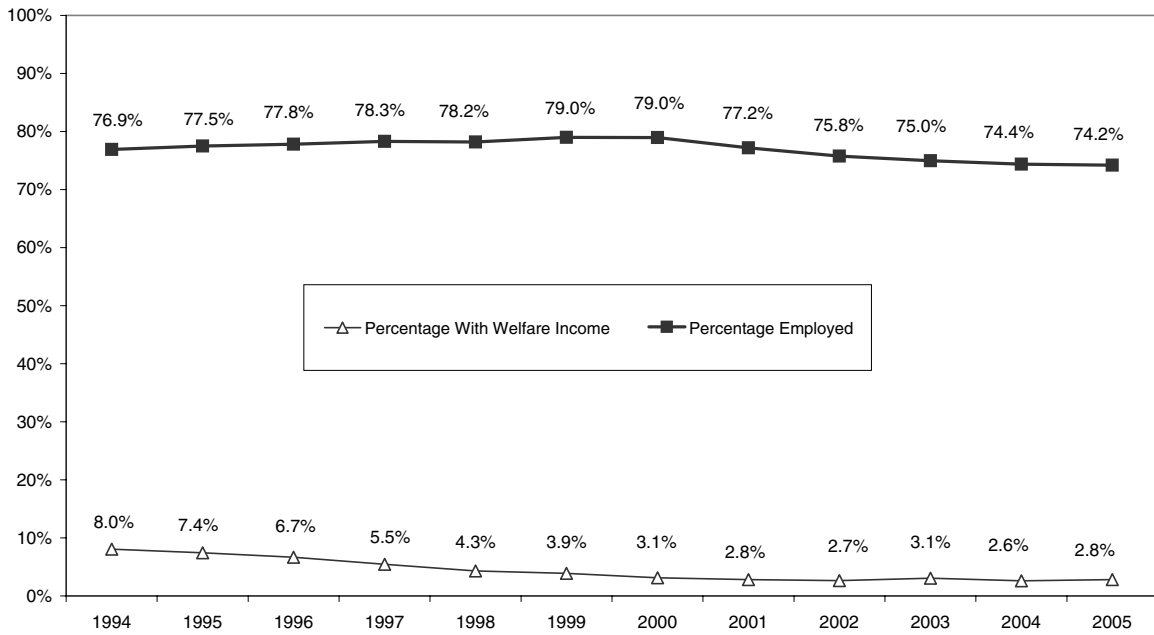
Source: Employee Benefit Research Institute estimates from the Current Population Survey, March 1995–2006 Supplements.

Figure 3
Percentage of Adults, Ages 18–64, With Employment-Based Health Benefits, Medicaid, and Without Health Insurance, 1994–2005



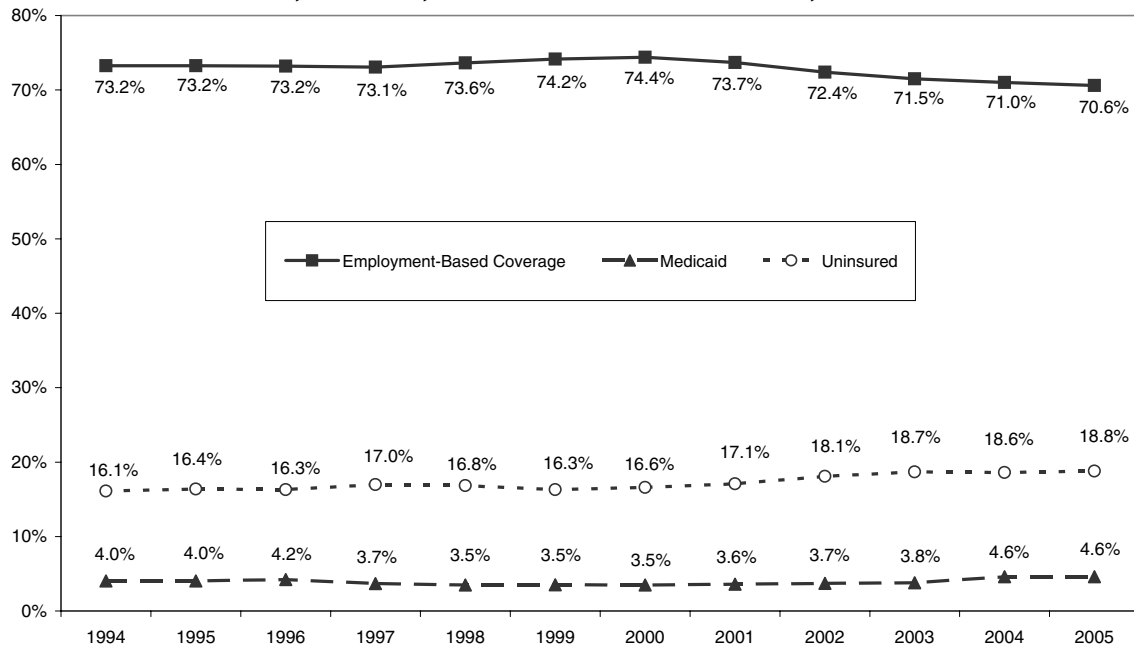
Source: Employee Benefit Research Institute estimates from the Current Population Survey, March 1995–2006 Supplements.

Figure 4
Percentage of Women Ages 18–45 Who Were in Families With Welfare Income or Who Were Employed, 1994–2005



Source: Employee Benefit Research Institute estimates from the Current Population Survey, March 1995–2006 Supplements.

Figure 5
Percentage of Workers, Ages 18–64, With Employment-Based Health Benefits, Medicaid, and Without Health Insurance, 1994–2005



Source: Employee Benefit Research Institute estimates from the Current Population Survey, March 1995–2006 Supplements.

Figure 6
Premium Increases by Firm Size, 1988–2006

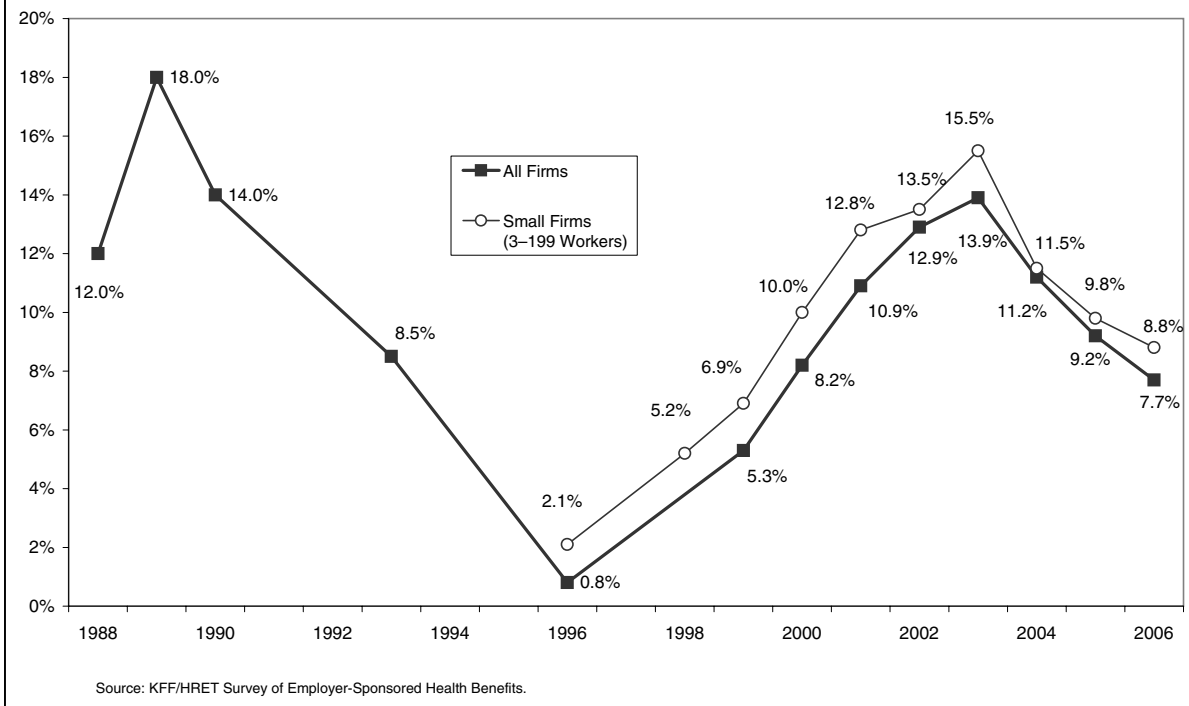
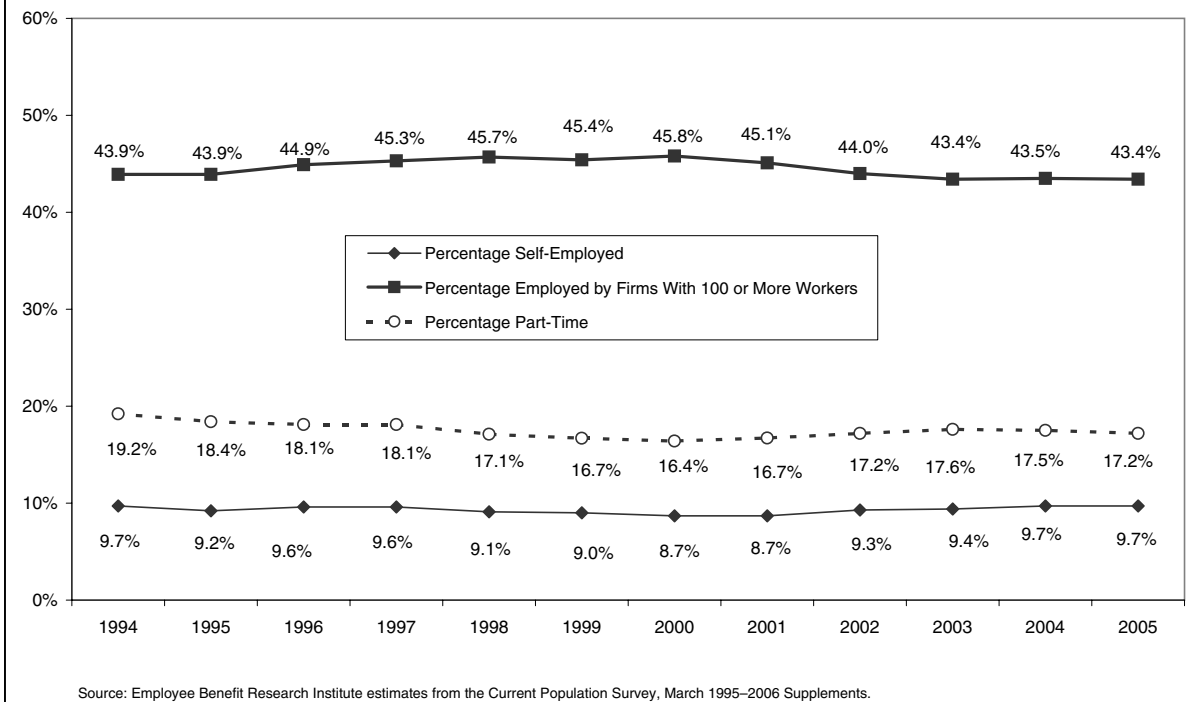


Figure 7
Percentage of Workers Who Were Self-Employed, Employed in Large Firms, or Employed Part-Time, 1994–2005



The increase in the percentage of individuals with employment-based health benefits between 1997 and 2000 has several explanations. A strong economy and low unemployment rates caused more employers to provide health benefits in order to attract and retain workers, and also may have resulted in more workers being able to afford health insurance. The expansion in employment-based coverage occurred despite the fact that the cost of providing health benefits to workers was increasing faster than inflation, a trend that accelerated in 1999 and 2000.

In contrast to the pre-2000 period, the post-2000 period has seen a reversal of these trends. Due to the weak economy and the rising cost of providing health benefits, there has been an erosion of employment-based health benefits. The percentage of individuals with employment-based health benefits decreased from 66.8 percent in 2000 to 62.0 percent in 2005. Expansions in the percentage of the population covered by public programs, particularly Medicaid, and the S-CHIP program, to some degree offset the erosion in employment-based health benefits until 2004. Between 1999 and 2004, the percentage of nonelderly individuals with some form of public coverage increased from 14.3 percent to 17.6 percent. However, the expansion in public coverage was not large enough to fully offset the decline in employment-based health benefits. As a result, the percentage of nonelderly individuals without health insurance coverage increased from 16.1 percent in 2000 to 17.6 percent in 2004. Furthermore, between 2004 and 2005, while the erosion in employment-based coverage continued, the expansion in public coverage did not, suggesting that the nation may be at the beginning of a new trend where the uninsured population is increasing faster than it otherwise would if public programs offset the erosion in employment-based coverage.

Determinants of Coverage

Full-time, full-year workers, public-sector employees, workers employed in manufacturing, managerial and professional workers, and individuals living in high-income families are most likely to have employment-based health benefits. Poor families are most likely to be covered by public health insurance such as Medicaid or S-CHIP.

Employment status is the most important determinant of health insurance coverage. Sixty-two percent of the nonelderly population has employment-based health benefits. This coverage can be obtained either directly through one's employer, union, or previous employer, or indirectly through an employed person in one's family.⁵

Large employers that provide access to group health insurance often are able to provide health benefits at lower cost than small employers, because they are subject to less adverse selection and their administrative costs and marketing costs are lower. But the larger firms often provide broader coverage and thus ultimately pay more per worker covered.

Furthermore, the nature of employment, the industry, and the firm's size often determine the cost and extent of coverage. Workers in large firms are more likely to be covered than those in small firms. In 2005, 62.0 percent of the nonelderly were covered by employment-based health benefits (Figure 1). Workers were much more likely to have employment-based health benefits than nonworkers, who typically receive such coverage through spouses or parents (Figure 8). Nearly 71 percent of workers had employment-based health benefits, compared with 37.7 percent of nonworkers. In addition, 72.5 percent of individuals in families headed by full-year, full-time workers had employment-based health benefits, compared with 39.2 percent of those in families headed by other workers, and 19.2 percent of individuals in families headed by a nonworker (Figure 9).

Workers employed in the public sector and in manufacturing were more likely than other workers to have employment-based health benefits in their own name (Figure 10). Nearly 25 percent of self-employed workers and 27.2 percent of private-sector workers in firms with fewer than 10 employees had employment-based health benefits in their own name in 2005, compared with 65.2 percent of private-sector workers in firms with 1,000 or more employees (Figure 11).

Occupation also has an impact. Nearly 67 percent of workers in managerial and professional occupations had employment-based health benefits in their own name, compared with 35.4 percent among workers in service occupations (Figure 12). In addition, hours worked and weeks worked have a strong impact on the likelihood that a worker has employment-based health benefits. More than 65 percent of workers employed

**Figure 8
Nonelderly Population With Selected Sources of Health Insurance, by Own Work Status, 2005**

Own Work Status	Total	Employment-Based Coverage			Individually	Public		Uninsured
		Total	Own name	Dependent	Purchased	Total	Medicaid	
(millions)								
Total	257.4	159.5	82.4	77.2	17.8	45.5	34.7	46.1
Child	74.0	42.5	0.2	42.3	5.9	21.9	19.7	8.3
Family head worker	92.8	64.8	58.8	6.0	6.0	7.2	4.8	17.5
Other worker	52.4	37.7	19.4	18.3	2.8	3.5	1.9	9.8
Nonworker	38.3	14.4	3.9	10.6	3.2	12.8	8.3	10.5
(percentage within coverage category)								
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Child	28.7	26.7	0.3	54.8	32.8	48.2	56.8	18.0
Family head worker	36.1	40.6	71.4	7.8	33.5	15.9	13.8	38.0
Other worker	20.3	23.7	23.6	23.7	15.8	7.7	5.5	21.3
Nonworker	14.9	9.1	4.7	13.7	17.9	28.1	23.9	22.7
(percentage within work status categories)								
Total	100.0%	62.0%	32.0%	30.0%	6.9%	17.7%	13.5%	17.9%
Child	100.0	57.5	0.3	57.2	7.9	29.7	26.7	11.2
Family head worker	100.0	69.8	63.3	6.5	6.4	7.8	5.2	18.9
Other worker	100.0	72.1	37.1	35.0	5.4	6.7	3.6	18.8
Nonworker	100.0	37.7	10.2	27.6	8.4	33.4	21.7	27.3

Source: Employee Benefit Research Institute estimates of the Current Population Survey, March 2006 Supplement.

Note: Details may not add to totals because individuals may receive coverage from more than one source.

**Figure 9
Nonelderly Population With Selected Sources of Health Insurance,
by Work Status of Family Head, 2006**

Work Status of Family Head	Total	Employment-Based Coverage			Individually	Public		Uninsured
		Total	Own name	Dependent	Purchased	Total	Medicaid	
(millions)								
Total	257.4	159.5	82.4	77.2	17.8	45.5	34.7	46.1
Full-year, full-time worker	193.5	140.3	70.3	69.9	10.8	21.5	15.3	28.7
Other worker	35.0	13.7	8.0	5.7	4.1	10.0	8.4	9.2
Nonworker	28.9	5.5	4.1	1.5	2.9	14.0	11.0	8.2
(percentage within coverage category)								
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Full-year, full-time worker	75.2	87.9	85.4	90.6	60.5	47.2	44.0	62.3
Other worker	13.6	8.6	9.7	7.4	23.1	22.0	24.3	19.9
Nonworker	11.2	3.5	4.9	1.9	16.4	30.8	31.7	17.8
(percentage within work status categories)								
Total	100.0%	62.0%	32.0%	30.0%	6.9%	17.7%	13.5%	17.9%
Full-year, full-time worker	100.0	72.5	36.3	36.1	5.6	11.1	7.9	14.8
Other worker	100.0	39.2	22.9	16.4	11.8	28.6	24.1	26.3
Nonworker	100.0	19.2	14.0	5.2	10.1	48.4	38.1	28.3

Source: Employee Benefit Research Institute estimates of the Current Population Survey, March 2006 Supplement.

Note: Details may not add to totals because individuals may receive coverage from more than one source.

full time and full year had employment-based health benefits from their own employer, compared with 23.6 percent among part-time, full-year employees; 38.8 percent among full-time, part-year employees; and 13.6 percent among part-time, part-year employees (Figure 13).

In general, individuals with high levels of income are more likely to be covered by employment-based health benefits. In 2005, 6.4 percent of individuals in families with annual income below \$10,000 had employment-based health benefits in their own name, compared with 39.1 percent of those in families with annual income of \$75,000 or more (Figure 14).

Figure 10
Workers Ages 18–64 With Selected Sources of Health Insurance, by Industry, 2005

Industry	Total	Employment-Based Coverage			Individually	Public		Uninsured
		Total	Own name	Dependent	Purchased	Total	Medicaid	
Total	145.2	102.5	78.2	24.3	8.8	10.8	6.7	27.3
(millions)								
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, mining & construction	14.1	7.2	5.4	1.8	1.1	0.8	0.6	5.2
Manufacturing	26.1	20.6	17.8	2.9	0.9	1.5	0.9	3.8
Wholesale & retail trade	45.7	31.9	23.4	8.5	3.2	3.3	2.0	8.5
Personal services	38.5	24.5	16.2	8.3	2.9	3.7	2.6	8.5
Public sector	20.8	18.2	15.5	2.8	0.6	1.5	0.6	1.3
(percentage within coverage category)								
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, mining & construction	9.7	7.0	6.9	7.6	12.8	7.8	9.1	19.0
Manufacturing	18.0	20.1	22.7	11.8	10.3	13.5	13.4	14.0
Wholesale & retail trade	31.5	31.1	29.9	35.0	36.8	30.3	30.2	31.0
Personal services	26.5	23.9	20.7	34.2	33.4	34.2	38.6	31.1
Public sector	14.3	17.8	19.8	11.3	6.7	14.2	8.7	4.9
(percentage within industry category)								
Total	100.0%	70.6%	53.9%	16.7%	6.1%	7.4%	4.6%	18.8%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, mining & construction	100.0	51.1	38.0	13.0	8.0	6.0	4.3	36.9
Manufacturing	100.0	79.0	68.0	11.0	3.5	5.6	3.4	14.6
Wholesale & retail trade	100.0	69.9	51.2	18.6	7.1	7.1	4.4	18.5
Personal services	100.0	63.8	42.2	21.6	7.7	9.6	6.7	22.1
Public sector	100.0	87.8	74.5	13.3	2.8	7.4	2.8	6.4

Source: Employee Benefit Research Institute estimates of the Current Population Survey, March 2006 Supplement.

Note: Details may not add to totals because individuals may receive coverage from more than one source.

Figure 11
Workers Ages 18–64 With Selected Sources of Health Insurance, by Firm Size, 2005

Firm Size	Total	Employment-Based Coverage			Individually	Public		Uninsured
		Total	Own name	Dependent	Purchased	Total	Medicaid	
Total	145.2	102.5	78.2	24.3	8.8	10.8	6.7	27.3
(millions)								
Self-Employed	14.1	7.0	3.5	3.5	2.6	0.9	0.5	3.8
Wage and Salary Workers	131.1	95.5	74.7	20.8	6.2	9.8	6.2	23.6
Public sector	20.8	18.2	15.5	2.8	0.6	1.5	0.6	1.3
Private sector	110.4	77.3	59.3	18.0	5.6	8.3	5.6	22.3
Fewer than 10	16.9	8.2	4.6	3.6	1.6	1.6	1.1	6.0
10–24	13.0	7.7	5.0	2.6	0.9	1.0	0.7	3.8
25–99	17.4	12.1	9.1	3.0	0.8	1.4	1.0	3.6
100–499	16.3	12.5	10.1	2.4	0.6	1.1	0.7	2.6
500–999	6.6	5.2	4.3	0.9	0.2	0.4	0.2	0.9
1,000 or more	40.1	31.7	26.1	5.5	1.5	2.8	1.7	5.4
(percentage within coverage category)								
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Self-Employed	9.7	6.9	4.5	14.5	29.7	8.6	8.1	13.8
Wage and Salary Workers	90.3	93.1	95.5	85.5	70.3	91.4	91.9	86.2
Public sector	14.3	17.8	19.8	11.3	6.7	14.2	8.7	4.9
Private sector	76.0	75.4	75.8	74.1	63.7	77.2	83.2	81.4
Fewer than 10	11.7	8.0	5.9	14.8	18.1	14.7	16.7	21.9
10–24	8.9	7.5	6.4	10.9	9.7	9.5	11.1	13.8
25–99	12.0	11.8	11.6	12.2	9.4	12.9	14.8	13.3
100–499	11.2	12.2	12.9	9.8	7.1	10.3	10.8	9.4
500–999	4.5	5.1	5.5	3.7	2.4	3.6	3.6	3.4
1,000 or more	27.6	30.9	33.4	22.7	17.0	26.2	26.0	19.7
(percentage within firm size categories)								
Total	100.0%	70.6%	53.9%	16.7%	6.1%	7.4%	4.6%	18.8%
Self-Employed	100.0	50.0	24.9	25.1	18.6	6.6	3.8	26.8
Wage and Salary Workers	100.0	72.8	57.0	15.8	4.7	7.5	4.7	18.0
Public sector	100.0	87.8	74.5	13.3	2.8	7.4	2.8	6.4
Private sector	100.0	70.0	53.7	16.3	5.1	7.5	5.0	20.2
Fewer than 10	100.0	48.4	27.2	21.2	9.4	9.3	6.6	35.3
10–24	100.0	58.9	38.5	20.4	6.6	7.9	5.7	29.0
25–99	100.0	69.3	52.3	17.1	4.7	7.9	5.7	20.9
100–499	100.0	76.5	61.9	14.6	3.8	6.8	4.5	15.7
500–999	100.0	79.4	65.8	13.6	3.3	5.9	3.6	14.1
1,000 or more	100.0	78.9	65.2	13.8	3.7	7.0	4.3	13.4

Source: Employee Benefit Research Institute estimates of the Current Population Survey, March 2006 Supplement.

Note: Details may not add to totals because individuals may receive coverage from more than one source.

Although public programs cover many individuals in poor families, most were not covered. In 2005, 48.3 percent of the nonelderly with family incomes below the poverty line were covered by a public plan—44.4 percent by Medicaid (Figure 15)—although many more low-income individuals may be eligible for Medicaid coverage.⁶ Other sources of public health insurance include S-CHIP, Medicare (which covers many disabled as well as the elderly), Tricare, CHAMPVA, and Veterans Administration (VA) health insurance.

Access to Coverage

Data for 2002 from the 2001 panel of the Survey of Income and Program Participation, also conducted by the Census Bureau, indicate that 15.2 percent of uninsured workers were eligible for health benefits from their own employer but chose not to participate (Figure 16).⁷ Nineteen percent of uninsured workers were employed by a firm that offered health benefits to some workers, but the worker was not eligible. The remainder were employed by firms that did not offer health benefits or did not know about their employers' health plan.

Among the 15.2 percent of uninsured workers eligible for health benefits in 2002, nearly two-thirds reported they declined it because of the cost (Figure 17). Less than 10 percent reported that they declined it because they did not think they needed coverage. Among uninsured workers not eligible for health benefits, most either did not work enough hours or weeks (44.4 percent) or had not yet completed the waiting period for benefits (41.8 percent) (Figure 18). Only 7.6 percent reported that they were not eligible for health benefits because they were employed either on a contract or temporary basis.

The Uninsured

Many factors influence whether an individual has any insurance coverage. This section presents data on the characteristics of the uninsured population.

Location

The proportion of the nonelderly population with and without health insurance varies by location.⁸ In 12 states, the uninsured averaged at least or close to 20 percent of the population during 2003–2005 (Figure 19). These states are generally in the south central United States. In many of these states, a smaller proportion of the population was eligible for employment-based health benefits and/or a larger proportion was eligible for publicly financed health programs than the national average. Both lower average income and higher unemployment rates may contribute to this difference. In addition, many of these states have a higher concentration of racial and ethnic groups that are less likely to be covered by health insurance.⁹

States with a relatively low percentage of uninsured individuals include Minnesota, Hawaii, Wisconsin, Iowa, and New Hampshire.

Employment

More than 82 percent of the uninsured lived in families headed by workers in 2005. Most people (88.8 percent) live in families headed by workers, including one-person families (Figure 9).

Industry

Workers employed in agriculture, forestry, fishing, mining, and construction were disproportionately more likely to be uninsured, with 36.9 percent being uninsured. This compares with 14.6 percent uninsured among workers in the manufacturing sector, 18.5 percent in wholesale and retail trade, and 22.1 percent in the service sector. Uninsured workers were most likely to be employed in the wholesale and retail trade or service industry, which collectively account for 58 percent of employment (Figure 10).

Firm Size

Nearly 63 percent of all uninsured workers were either self-employed or working in private-sector firms with fewer than 100 employees in 2005 (Figure 11). Nearly 27 percent of self-employed workers were uninsured, compared with 18.8 percent of all workers. More than 35 percent of workers in private-sector firms with fewer than 10 employees were uninsured, compared with 13.4 percent of workers in private-sector firms with 1,000 or more employees.

Figure 12
Workers Ages 18–64 With Selected Sources of Health Insurance, by Occupation, 2005

Occupation	Total	Employment-Based Coverage			Individually	Public		Uninsured
		Total	Own name	Dependent	Purchased	Total	Medicaid	
(millions)								
Total	145.2	102.5	78.2	24.3	8.8	10.8	6.7	27.3
Managerial and professional specialty	49.3	41.1	32.8	8.3	2.9	2.4	1.0	4.3
Service occupations	24.5	13.4	8.6	4.7	1.8	3.0	2.1	7.2
Sales and office occupations	36.5	26.3	18.9	7.4	2.4	2.9	1.8	6.0
Farming, fishing, and forestry	1.0	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.5
Construction, extraction, and maintenance	15.2	8.7	7.1	1.6	0.8	0.9	0.6	5.0
Production, transportation, and material moving	18.7	12.6	10.5	2.1	0.8	1.6	1.1	4.3
(percentage within coverage category)								
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Managerial and professional specialty	34.0	40.1	41.9	34.1	33.1	22.0	15.5	15.7
Service occupations	16.8	13.0	11.1	19.4	20.5	27.5	31.9	26.2
Sales and office occupations	25.1	25.7	24.2	30.5	27.3	26.5	26.3	22.0
Farming, fishing, and forestry	0.7	0.4	0.3	0.6	1.0	1.0	1.2	1.7
Construction, extraction, and maintenance	10.5	8.5	9.1	6.5	9.4	8.5	9.0	18.4
Production, transportation, and material moving	12.9	12.3	13.4	8.8	8.8	14.5	16.1	15.9
(percentage within occupation category)								
Total	100.0%	70.6%	53.9%	16.7%	6.1%	7.4%	4.6%	18.8%
Managerial and professional specialty	100.0	83.3	66.5	16.8	5.9	4.8	2.1	8.7
Service occupations	100.0	54.7	35.4	19.3	7.4	12.1	8.7	29.3
Sales and office occupations	100.0	72.2	51.8	20.3	6.6	7.8	4.8	16.5
Farming, fishing, and forestry	100.0	38.6	24.2	14.4	8.4	9.8	7.9	45.2
Construction, extraction, and maintenance	100.0	57.4	47.0	10.5	5.4	6.1	4.0	33.2
Production, transportation, and material moving	100.0	67.6	56.2	11.4	4.1	8.3	5.8	23.3

Source: Employee Benefit Research Institute estimates of the Current Population Survey, March 2006 Supplement.

Note: Details may not add to totals because individuals may receive coverage from more than one source.

Figure 13
Workers Ages 18–64 With Selected Sources of Health Insurance, by Hours and Weeks Worked, 2005

Hours and Weeks Worked	Total	Employment-Based Coverage			Individually	Public		Uninsured
		Total	Own name	Dependent	Purchased	Total	Medicaid	
(millions)								
Total	145.2	102.5	78.2	24.3	8.8	10.8	6.7	27.3
Full-time, full-year	101.4	78.3	66.2	12.1	4.6	5.0	2.6	16.0
Part-time, full-year	13.2	7.6	3.1	4.5	1.5	1.5	1.0	3.1
Full-time, part-year	18.8	10.5	7.3	3.2	1.3	2.3	1.6	5.5
Part-time, part-year	11.8	6.2	1.6	4.6	1.4	2.0	1.4	2.8
(percentage within coverage category)								
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Full-time, full-year	69.8	76.4	84.6	49.8	52.6	46.1	39.1	58.6
Part-time, full-year	9.1	7.4	4.0	18.3	16.8	13.9	14.8	11.2
Full-time, part-year	13.0	10.2	9.3	13.1	14.6	21.7	24.4	20.0
Part-time, part-year	8.1	6.0	2.0	18.8	15.9	18.3	21.7	10.2
(percentage within hours and weeks category)								
Total	100.0%	70.6%	53.9%	16.7%	6.1%	7.4%	4.6%	18.8%
Full-time, full-year	100.0	77.2	65.3	11.9	4.6	4.9	2.6	15.8
Part-time, full-year	100.0	57.4	23.6	33.8	11.2	11.3	7.5	23.3
Full-time, part-year	100.0	55.7	38.8	16.9	6.8	12.4	8.7	29.0
Part-time, part-year	100.0	52.4	13.6	38.8	11.9	16.7	12.3	23.8

Source: Employee Benefit Research Institute estimates of the Current Population Survey, March 2006 Supplement.

Note: Details may not add to totals because individuals may receive coverage from more than one source.

Figure 14
Nonelderly Population With Selected Sources of Health Insurance, by Family Income, 2005

Family Income	Total	Employment-Based Coverage			Individually	Public		Uninsured
		Total	Own name	Dependent	Purchased	Total	Medicaid	
(millions)								
Total	257.4	159.5	82.4	77.2	17.8	45.5	34.7	46.1
Under \$10,000	21.8	2.5	1.4	1.1	2.3	10.2	9.3	7.7
\$10,000–\$19,999	23.8	5.4	3.7	1.7	2.1	9.5	8.2	8.0
\$20,000–\$29,999	25.7	10.5	6.9	3.6	2.1	6.8	5.5	7.6
\$30,000–\$39,999	25.6	14.2	8.7	5.5	2.0	4.9	3.9	5.8
\$40,000–\$49,999	23.6	15.4	8.7	6.7	1.7	3.6	2.4	4.2
\$50,000–\$74,000	49.1	37.0	18.7	18.4	2.9	5.0	3.1	6.4
\$75,000 and over	87.8	74.6	34.3	40.3	4.6	5.4	2.3	6.4
(percentage within coverage category)								
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Under \$10,000	8.5	1.5	1.7	1.4	13.0	22.5	26.7	16.6
\$10,000–\$19,999	9.3	3.4	4.5	2.2	12.0	20.8	23.7	17.4
\$20,000–\$29,999	10.0	6.6	8.4	4.7	11.8	15.0	16.0	16.6
\$30,000–\$39,999	9.9	8.9	10.5	7.1	11.3	10.8	11.1	12.5
\$40,000–\$49,999	9.2	9.7	10.6	8.7	9.8	7.8	7.0	9.0
\$50,000–\$74,000	19.1	23.2	22.7	23.8	16.1	11.1	8.9	13.9
\$75,000 and over	34.1	46.8	41.7	52.2	26.0	12.0	6.6	14.0
(percentage within family income category)								
Total	100.0%	62.0%	32.0%	30.0%	6.9%	17.7%	13.5%	17.9%
Under \$10,000	100.0	11.3	6.4	4.9	10.7	47.0	42.5	35.1
\$10,000–\$19,999	100.0	22.5	15.5	7.0	9.0	39.7	34.6	33.7
\$20,000–\$29,999	100.0	40.8	26.8	14.0	8.2	26.5	21.6	29.8
\$30,000–\$39,999	100.0	55.4	33.9	21.5	7.9	19.3	15.1	22.6
\$40,000–\$49,999	100.0	65.4	37.0	28.5	7.4	15.1	10.3	17.7
\$50,000–\$74,000	100.0	75.3	38.0	37.4	5.9	10.3	6.3	13.0
\$75,000 and over	100.0	85.0	39.1	45.9	5.3	6.2	2.6	7.3

Source: Employee Benefit Research Institute estimates of the Current Population Survey, March 2006 Supplement.
 Note: Details may not add to totals because individuals may receive coverage from more than one source.

Figure 15
Nonelderly Population With Selected Sources of Health Insurance, by Family Income as a Percentage of Poverty, 2005

Family Poverty Status	Total	Employment-Based Coverage			Individually	Public		Uninsured
		Total	Own name	Dependent	Purchased	Total	Medicaid	
(millions)								
Total	257.4	159.5	82.4	77.2	17.8	45.5	34.7	46.1
0–99% of poverty	34.0	4.5	2.3	2.3	3.1	16.4	15.1	11.5
100%–149% of poverty	21.3	6.4	3.1	3.3	1.7	7.5	6.4	6.8
150%–199% of poverty	23.0	10.4	4.9	5.5	1.9	5.5	4.4	6.5
200%–299% of poverty	42.8	26.5	13.0	13.5	3.3	6.5	4.5	8.7
300% of poverty or more	136.4	111.8	59.2	52.6	7.8	9.7	4.3	12.5
(percentage within poverty category)								
Total	100.0%	62.0%	32.0%	30.0%	6.9%	17.7%	13.5%	17.9%
0–99% of poverty	100.0	13.4	6.7	6.7	9.1	48.3	44.4	33.9
100%–149% of poverty	100.0	30.0	14.5	15.5	8.1	35.0	30.2	32.0
150%–199% of poverty	100.0	45.1	21.1	24.0	8.3	23.9	19.2	28.4
200%–299% of poverty	100.0	61.9	30.4	31.5	7.8	15.1	10.5	20.4
300% of poverty or more	100.0	81.9	43.4	38.6	5.7	7.1	3.1	9.2

Source: Employee Benefit Research Institute estimates from the Current Population Survey, March 2006 Supplement.
 Note: Details may not add to totals because individuals may receive coverage from more than one source.

Occupation

The uninsured are concentrated disproportionately in service-sector occupations or blue-collar jobs. In 2005, 24.1 percent of workers were employed in blue-collar-type jobs, such as jobs in farming, fishing, forestry, construction, extraction, maintenance, production, transportation, and material moving, yet 36.1 percent of uninsured workers were in these types of jobs (Figure 12).

Hours of Work

Part-time and part-year, usually seasonal, workers are less likely to have employment-based health benefits than full-time and full-year workers. Part-time or part-year workers accounted for 30.2 percent of the employed population, but accounted for 41.4 percent of uninsured workers (Figure 13). Nearly 30 percent of full-time, part-year workers were uninsured. Nearly 24 percent of part-time, part-year workers were uninsured, and 23.3 percent of part-time, full-year workers were uninsured. Less than 16 percent of full-time, full-year workers were uninsured. Full-time workers employed for only part of the year were more likely to be uninsured than part-time, part-year workers because the latter were more likely to be covered by Medicaid, and more likely to have some form of individually purchased insurance.

Income

The uninsured tend to be members of low-income families. In 2005, 34 percent of the uninsured were in families with annual incomes of less than \$20,000 (Figure 14). More than 35 percent of individuals in families with incomes less than \$10,000 were uninsured, compared with 7 percent of those in families with annual incomes of \$75,000 or more. Generally, as income increases, the percentage of the population without health insurance decreases as the percentage covered by employment-based benefits increases more than the percentage covered by publicly financed health insurance programs decreases.

Workers with low earnings are much more likely to be uninsured than those with high earnings. One-third of workers with earnings of less than \$20,000 were uninsured, compared with 5.4 percent of workers with earnings of \$75,000 or more (Figure 20). Low-income workers are employed generally in industries that are less likely to offer health benefits, may have a weaker (or temporary) attachment to the work force, and have less disposable income to allocate to the purchase of health benefits.

Race and Ethnic Origin

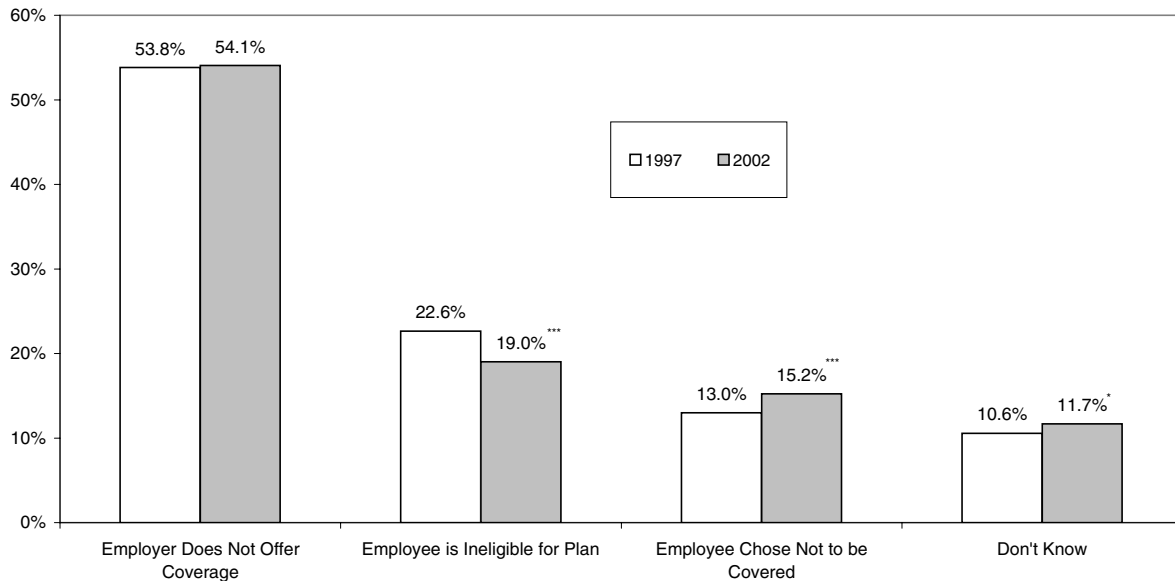
While 64.7 percent of the nonelderly population is white, whites comprised 47.6 percent of the uninsured. Individuals of Hispanic origin were more likely to be uninsured than other groups (34.3 percent) (Figure 21). This may be due in part to the fact that 65 percent of the Hispanic population reported income of less than 200 percent of the federal poverty level (Figure 22). Also, a higher proportion of Hispanics are immigrants and may work for small firms or be employed on a part-time or part-year basis. However, even at high income levels, Hispanics generally were more likely to be uninsured than other racial groups and were less likely to have employment-based health benefits.

Gender and Age

Men are generally more likely than women to be uninsured. More than 22 percent of men were uninsured in 2005, compared with 18.8 percent of women (Figure 23). This difference between men and women is observed at all age groups except for 55–64-year-olds, where women were more likely to be uninsured than men (14.3 percent of women were uninsured, while 12.9 percent of men were uninsured).

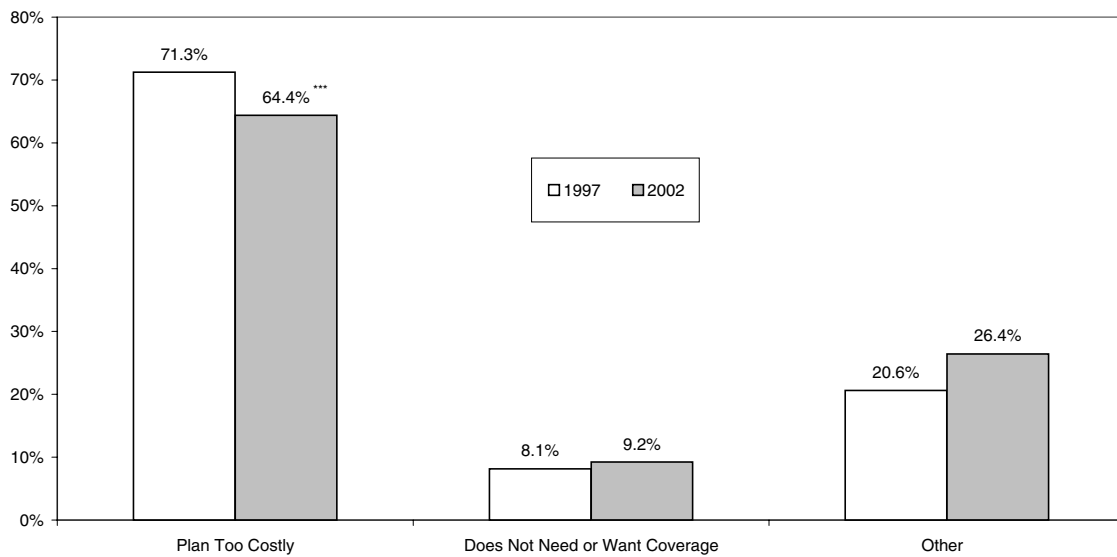
Younger adults are more likely than older adults to be uninsured. Nearly 40 percent of men ages 21–24 and 30.6 percent of women ages 21–24 were uninsured in 2005. This compares with 15.8 percent of men ages 45–54 and 14.8 percent of women ages 45–54 uninsured. Young adults are often more likely to be uninsured because they are no longer covered by a family policy and may not have established themselves as permanent members of the work force. Some young adults may also have lost access to Medicaid, which covered them up through age 18. Many in this age group may think that they do not need health insurance because the likelihood of encountering a high-cost medical event is very low.¹⁰ In addition, young workers may be ineligible for employment-based health benefits because of waiting periods imposed prior to eligibility.

Figure 16
Reasons Uninsured Employees Are Not Covered by Own Employer's Health Plan, Wage and Salary Workers Ages 18–64, 1997 and 2002



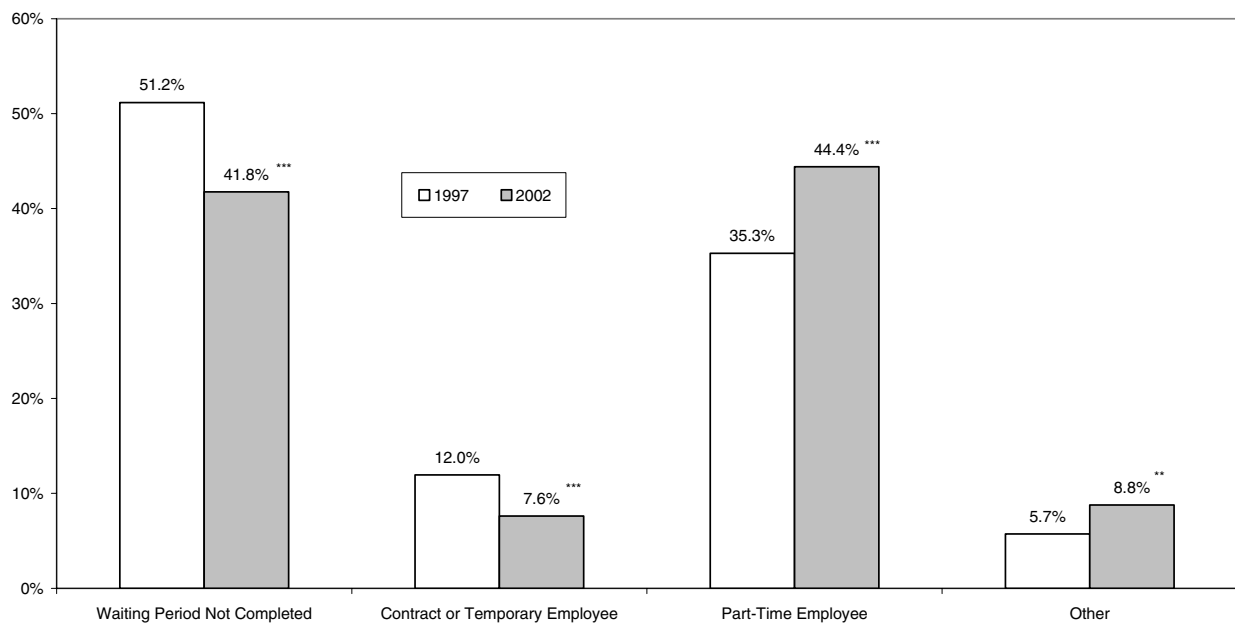
Source: Employee Benefit Research Institute estimates based on data from the Survey of Income and Program Participation, 1996 and 2001 panels.
 *** Estimate is statistically different from the previous year at the 99% confidence level.
 ** Estimate is statistically different from the previous year at the 95% confidence level.
 * Estimate is statistically different from the previous year at the 90% confidence level.

Figure 17
Reasons Uninsured Workers Choose Not to Participate in Own Employer's Health Plan, Wage and Salary Workers Ages 18–64, 1997 and 2002



Source: Employee Benefit Research Institute estimates based on data from the Survey of Income and Program Participation, 1996 and 2001 panels.
 *** Estimate is statistically different from the previous year at the 99% confidence level.

Figure 18
Reasons Uninsured Workers Are Ineligible for Own Employer's Health Plan,^a Wage and Salary Workers Ages 18–64, 1997 and 2002



Source: Employee Benefit Research Institute estimates based on data from the Survey of Income and Program Participation, 1996 and 2001 panels.

^a Details sum to more than 100 percent because workers can choose more than one reason for being ineligible.

*** Estimate is statistically different from the previous year at the 99% confidence level.

** Estimate is statistically different from the previous year at the 95% confidence level.

Children

More than 11 percent of all children—or 8.3 million children—were uninsured in 2005 (Figure 24). More than 64 percent of all uninsured children were in families with income below 200 percent of the federal poverty level. Nearly 20 percent of children whose family head did not work were uninsured (Figure 25), though most uninsured children were in families whose head was employed full-time and full-year (67.7 percent) (Figure 26). In families where the head worked part time or experienced some unemployment the probability of being uninsured was higher than average (Figure 25).

Policy Implications

Uninsured individuals are a public policy concern for a number of reasons. First, individuals without health insurance are less likely to receive basic health care services. The uninsured report having fewer ambulatory visits than individuals with health insurance, and, as a result, are more likely to seek care in a more costly emergency room setting.¹¹ This population's overall health status may be lower, and individuals' overall productivity may be lower (Fronstin and Holtmann, 2000). Historically, providers of health care, especially hospitals but also physicians, have not been paid for care provided to uninsured individuals, and have tried to shift the cost of that care to other payers.¹²

A recent Institute of Medicine report provides detailed information on the cost of the uninsured to society (Institute of Medicine, 2003). According to the report, society is affected in a number of ways: There is lost work-place productivity and lost health and longevity. There is financial risk, uncertainty, and anxiety. And there are financial stresses and instability for health care providers and institutions in communities with relatively high uninsured rates. The mortality rate is 25 percent higher among the uninsured than it is among the insured. In addition, uninsured children are at greater risk of suffering delays in development that may affect their educational achievements and prospects later in life. Overall, the report suggests that the aggregate, annualized cost of diminished health and shorter life spans of the uninsured is between \$65 billion and \$135 billion.

Figure 19
Nonelderly Population With Selected Sources of Health Insurance,
by Region and State, Three-Year Average 2003–2005

Region and State	Total	Employment-Based Coverage			Individually	Public		Uninsured
		Total	Own name	Dependent	Purchased	Total	Medicaid	
	(millions)							
Total	255.1	159.3	81.8	77.5	17.6	44.3	33.9	45.2
New England	12.3	8.5	4.2	4.3	0.8	2.0	1.7	1.5
Maine	1.1	0.7	0.4	0.3	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.1
New Hampshire	1.1	0.9	0.4	0.4	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Vermont	0.5	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1
Massachusetts	5.6	3.8	1.9	2.0	0.4	0.9	0.8	0.7
Rhode Island	0.9	0.6	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.1
Connecticut	3.0	2.1	1.1	1.1	0.2	0.4	0.3	0.4
Middle Atlantic	34.5	23.0	11.7	11.4	2.0	5.7	4.9	5.2
New York	16.5	10.4	5.3	5.0	0.9	3.4	3.0	2.6
New Jersey	7.6	5.5	2.6	2.8	0.3	0.8	0.6	1.2
Pennsylvania	10.4	7.2	3.7	3.5	0.8	1.5	1.2	1.4
East North Central	40.0	27.3	13.5	13.9	2.5	6.1	4.9	5.7
Ohio	9.9	6.9	3.4	3.5	0.6	1.5	1.2	1.3
Indiana	5.5	3.7	1.8	1.8	0.3	0.8	0.6	0.9
Illinois	11.1	7.4	3.7	3.7	0.7	1.5	1.2	1.8
Michigan	8.8	6.1	2.9	3.2	0.6	1.5	1.2	1.1
Wisconsin	4.8	3.3	1.6	1.7	0.4	0.7	0.6	0.6
West North Central	17.0	11.6	6.0	5.7	1.5	2.5	1.9	2.0
Minnesota	4.5	3.3	1.7	1.6	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.4
Iowa	2.5	1.8	0.9	0.9	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3
Missouri	4.9	3.2	1.7	1.5	0.4	0.9	0.7	0.7
North Dakota	0.5	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1
South Dakota	0.7	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Nebraska	1.5	1.0	0.5	0.5	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Kansas	2.3	1.6	0.8	0.8	0.2	0.4	0.2	0.3
South Atlantic	47.5	29.2	15.6	13.6	3.1	8.5	5.6	9.2
Delaware	0.7	0.5	0.3	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1
Maryland	4.9	3.4	1.7	1.6	0.3	0.7	0.4	0.8
District of Columbia	0.5	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1
Virginia	6.5	4.4	2.3	2.1	0.4	1.1	0.5	1.0
West Virginia	1.5	0.9	0.5	0.4	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.3
North Carolina	7.4	4.4	2.4	2.0	0.5	1.5	1.0	1.4
South Carolina	3.6	2.2	1.2	1.0	0.2	0.8	0.5	0.6
Georgia	7.9	4.9	2.6	2.3	0.4	1.5	1.1	1.5
Florida	14.5	8.3	4.5	3.8	1.1	2.5	1.7	3.4
East South Central	15.1	9.1	4.8	4.3	1.0	3.4	2.5	2.5
Kentucky	3.5	2.2	1.2	1.0	0.2	0.8	0.5	0.6
Tennessee	5.1	3.0	1.6	1.4	0.4	1.2	0.9	0.8
Alabama	3.9	2.4	1.2	1.2	0.2	0.9	0.6	0.6
Mississippi	2.5	1.4	0.8	0.6	0.1	0.6	0.5	0.5
West South Central	29.1	15.9	8.3	7.6	1.8	5.2	3.9	7.4
Arkansas	2.3	1.3	0.7	0.6	0.2	0.5	0.4	0.5
Louisiana	3.8	2.1	1.1	1.0	0.3	0.7	0.6	0.8
Oklahoma	2.9	1.7	0.9	0.8	0.2	0.6	0.4	0.7
Texas	20.1	10.9	5.7	5.2	1.1	3.4	2.6	5.4
Mountain	17.6	10.5	5.3	5.2	1.4	3.0	2.1	3.5
Montana	0.8	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2
Idaho	1.3	0.8	0.4	0.4	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2
Wyoming	0.4	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1
Colorado	4.1	2.6	1.3	1.3	0.4	0.5	0.3	0.8
New Mexico	1.7	0.8	0.4	0.4	0.1	0.4	0.3	0.4
Arizona	5.0	2.8	1.5	1.4	0.4	1.1	0.8	1.0
Utah	2.2	1.5	0.6	0.9	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.4
Nevada	2.1	1.3	0.7	0.6	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.4
Pacific	42.0	24.1	12.6	11.5	3.5	7.9	6.4	8.3
Washington	5.4	3.4	1.9	1.6	0.4	1.0	0.7	0.9
Oregon	3.1	1.9	1.0	0.9	0.3	0.5	0.4	0.6
California	31.8	17.6	9.1	8.6	2.7	6.0	5.1	6.6
Alaska	0.6	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.1	0.1
Hawaii	1.1	0.8	0.4	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1

(cont'd.)

(Figure 19, cont'd.)

Region and State	Total	Employment-Based Coverage			Individually	Public		
		Total	Own name	Dependent	Purchased	Total	Medicaid	Uninsured
(percentage)								
Total	100.0%	62.5%	32.1%	30.4%	6.9%	17.4%	13.3%	17.7%
New England	100.0	69.2	34.2	35.0	6.2	16.6	13.8	12.2
Maine	100.0	62.3	33.6	28.7	6.6	25.7	20.9	12.1
New Hampshire	100.0	76.4	37.1	39.2	5.3	10.1	6.3	11.8
Vermont	100.0	63.7	32.6	31.0	6.7	24.1	20.2	12.2
Massachusetts	100.0	68.9	33.3	35.6	6.5	16.1	14.1	12.1
Rhode Island	100.0	67.5	33.9	33.6	6.1	20.2	16.9	12.4
Connecticut	100.0	71.0	35.2	35.8	5.7	14.3	11.2	12.6
Middle Atlantic	100.0	66.7	33.7	33.0	5.8	16.4	14.1	15.1
New York	100.0	62.7	32.2	30.5	5.6	20.4	18.3	15.8
New Jersey	100.0	71.7	34.6	37.1	4.3	10.3	8.1	16.3
Pennsylvania	100.0	69.4	35.5	33.9	7.3	14.6	11.9	13.0
East North Central	100.0	68.3	33.7	34.7	6.3	15.3	12.2	14.2
Ohio	100.0	69.3	34.5	34.8	5.6	15.6	12.3	13.5
Indiana	100.0	66.8	33.6	33.2	6.1	15.3	11.8	15.8
Illinois	100.0	67.2	33.4	33.8	6.4	13.6	10.5	16.0
Michigan	100.0	69.1	32.8	36.3	6.4	16.8	13.9	12.7
Wisconsin	100.0	69.3	34.2	35.1	7.4	15.5	12.9	11.8
West North Central	100.0	68.5	35.2	33.3	9.1	14.9	11.1	12.0
Minnesota	100.0	72.4	36.9	35.5	9.7	11.7	9.4	9.7
Iowa	100.0	70.1	35.8	34.3	9.7	13.8	10.6	11.3
Missouri	100.0	66.1	35.2	30.9	7.2	17.4	13.7	13.6
North Dakota	100.0	65.5	33.3	32.2	11.9	14.6	9.0	13.0
South Dakota	100.0	62.1	32.2	30.0	12.2	17.3	12.0	14.0
Nebraska	100.0	66.5	32.8	33.7	10.2	15.4	10.4	12.9
Kansas	100.0	68.0	33.7	34.3	8.8	16.0	10.2	12.4
South Atlantic	100.0	61.5	32.8	28.7	6.6	17.8	11.8	19.3
Delaware	100.0	69.7	36.9	32.8	4.5	16.5	11.5	14.4
Maryland	100.0	69.4	35.5	33.9	5.7	13.4	8.8	15.8
District of Columbia	100.0	57.9	39.5	18.4	7.1	23.6	21.4	15.0
Virginia	100.0	67.7	35.0	32.7	6.4	17.1	7.7	15.3
West Virginia	100.0	58.3	29.7	28.6	4.5	23.0	16.2	19.8
North Carolina	100.0	59.9	32.7	27.2	7.4	19.7	13.2	18.3
South Carolina	100.0	60.8	32.4	28.3	6.1	21.2	15.1	18.0
Georgia	100.0	61.6	32.9	28.7	5.5	18.3	13.6	19.3
Florida	100.0	57.1	30.8	26.3	7.5	16.9	11.5	23.3
East South Central	100.0	60.0	31.5	28.5	6.4	22.8	16.5	16.5
Kentucky	100.0	62.4	33.5	28.9	6.2	21.8	15.0	15.7
Tennessee	100.0	59.1	30.8	28.3	7.5	23.1	17.0	15.7
Alabama	100.0	62.3	31.4	30.9	5.5	21.6	15.2	16.3
Mississippi	100.0	55.0	30.1	24.9	5.6	25.7	19.9	19.6
West South Central	100.0	54.7	28.6	26.2	6.0	17.9	13.6	25.4
Arkansas	100.0	55.5	28.7	26.8	7.6	22.6	16.5	20.0
Louisiana	100.0	55.7	28.2	27.4	7.4	19.8	15.6	21.3
Oklahoma	100.0	56.8	30.4	26.4	5.9	19.7	13.2	22.7
Texas	100.0	54.1	28.3	25.8	5.6	16.7	12.9	27.1
Mountain	100.0	59.9	30.3	29.6	8.1	16.9	12.2	19.7
Montana	100.0	53.6	28.1	25.5	10.7	18.7	12.5	21.6
Idaho	100.0	60.5	31.2	29.3	9.5	16.1	12.7	18.3
Wyoming	100.0	60.5	32.0	28.6	9.8	17.7	11.5	17.2
Colorado	100.0	63.6	32.7	30.9	8.8	12.6	7.7	18.6
New Mexico	100.0	51.1	26.2	24.9	5.9	25.2	19.1	24.1
Arizona	100.0	55.6	28.8	26.8	7.7	20.9	16.5	20.7
Utah	100.0	66.3	27.4	38.9	9.1	13.5	10.0	15.7
Nevada	100.0	64.7	35.1	29.5	6.4	12.3	7.5	20.6
Pacific	100.0	57.4	30.0	27.4	8.3	18.7	15.2	19.8
Washington	100.0	63.2	34.7	28.5	7.9	18.9	13.1	15.9
Oregon	100.0	61.2	32.4	28.8	8.4	15.5	12.4	19.1
California	100.0	55.5	28.6	26.9	8.5	18.8	16.0	20.8
Alaska	100.0	57.8	29.8	28.1	5.5	26.7	15.7	19.3
Hawaii	100.0	71.3	40.0	31.3	4.7	20.2	11.0	11.1

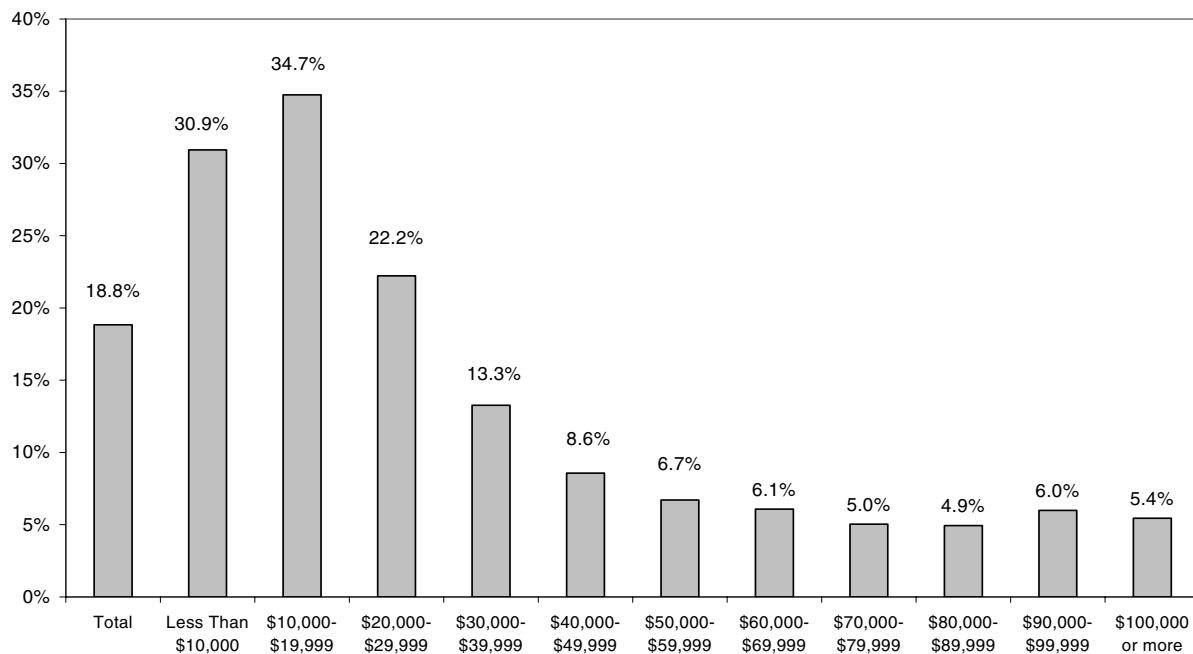
Source: Employee Benefit Research Institute estimates of the 2004-2006 Current Population Survey, March Supplement.

Note: Details may not add to totals because individuals may receive coverage from more than one source.

The combination of a growing economy in the 1990s and the lowest unemployment rates in more than 25 years resulted in an increase in the percentage of individuals in the United States with employment-based health benefits and a decrease in the uninsured in 1999 and 2000. However, the fact that the average annual unemployment rate declined from 6 percent in 2003 to only 5.1 percent in 2005 may mean that the labor market is not strong enough to offset the impact of the rising cost of providing health benefits on the percentage of individuals with coverage. In 2005, the unemployment rate remained above the 4 percent level last seen in 2000, the last year in which the percentage of individuals with employment-based health benefits increased. The unemployment rate averaged 4.7 percent during the first half of 2006. The closer the unemployment rate gets to 4 percent the greater the likelihood that the percentage of individuals with employment-based health benefits will turn around as it did in the late 1990s. However, if unemployment remains above 4.5 percent, coupled with the rising cost of providing health benefits, the nation is likely to see either a continued erosion or stabilization of employment-based health benefits. Furthermore, as long as the economy is strong enough and the labor market tight enough to keep people off of public assistance programs, public programs are not likely to expand in order to offset the erosion of employment-based health benefits, which means the relative size of the uninsured population will continue to increase.

This *Issue Brief* has provided data on recent trends in health benefits, a summary of the characteristics of people with and without health insurance, and the sources of the health insurance, from the March 2006 CPS. The data and issues discussed are important not only to policymakers but also to all employers, because health insurance is the benefit most valued by workers and their families. Sixty percent of workers responding to a recent survey rated employment-based health benefits as the most important benefit (Helman and Fronstin, 2004). Health benefits provide workers and their families with financial security against losses that can accompany unexpected serious illness or injury. Employers offer health insurance as an employee benefit for a number of reasons—to promote health and increase worker productivity, as well as to provide financial security. Health benefits also are a form of compensation used to recruit and retain workers. There also may be a “business case” for health benefits, meaning employers may want to offer them if a compensation package comprised of both wages and health benefits is more profitable than one providing wages alone.

Figure 20
**Percentage Uninsured Among Workers
 Ages 18–64, by Total Earnings, 2005**



Source: Employee Benefit Research Institute estimates from the Current Population Survey, March 2006 Supplement.

Figure 21
Nonelderly Population With Selected Sources of Health Insurance, by Race, 2005

Race	Total	Employment-Based Coverage			Individually	Public		Uninsured
		Total	Own name	Dependent	Purchased	Total	Medicaid	
(millions)								
Total	257.4	159.5	82.4	77.2	17.8	45.5	34.7	46.1
White	166.6	115.9	59.9	56.0	13.1	23.0	15.5	22.0
Black	32.6	16.2	9.2	7.0	1.7	9.8	8.2	6.8
Hispanic	40.8	16.7	8.1	8.6	1.7	9.8	8.8	14.0
Other	17.5	10.7	5.2	5.5	1.3	3.0	2.2	3.4
(percentage within race category)								
Total	100.0%	62.0%	32.0%	30.0%	6.9%	17.7%	13.5%	17.9%
White	100.0	69.6	36.0	33.6	7.9	13.8	9.3	13.2
Black	100.0	49.7	28.1	21.6	5.2	30.1	25.2	20.9
Hispanic	100.0	41.0	20.0	21.0	4.2	23.9	21.5	34.3
Other	100.0	61.1	29.5	31.6	7.4	16.9	12.8	19.2

Source: Employee Benefit Research Institute estimates of the Current Population Survey, March 2006 Supplement.
Note: Details may not add to totals because individuals may receive coverage from more than one source.

Figure 22
Nonelderly Population With Selected Sources of Health Insurance, by Race and Family Poverty Status, 2005

Race and Family Poverty Status	Total	Employment-Based Coverage			Individually	Public		Uninsured
		Total	Own name	Dependent	Purchased	Total	Medicaid	
(millions)								
White	166.6	115.9	59.9	56.0	13.1	23.0	15.5	22.0
0-99% of poverty	14.3	2.3	1.2	1.1	2.0	6.4	5.7	4.3
100%-149% of poverty	9.8	3.2	1.6	1.6	1.2	3.3	2.7	2.7
150%-199% of poverty	11.8	5.8	2.7	3.1	1.3	2.8	2.1	2.7
200%-299% of poverty	26.4	17.4	8.5	8.9	2.6	3.7	2.4	4.2
300% of poverty or more	104.2	87.2	45.9	41.3	6.2	6.8	2.7	8.0
Black	32.6	16.2	9.2	7.0	1.7	9.8	8.2	6.8
0-99% of poverty	8.3	1.0	0.5	0.5	0.5	5.0	4.6	2.3
100%-149% of poverty	3.8	1.2	0.6	0.6	0.2	1.6	1.4	1.1
150%-199% of poverty	3.8	1.8	0.9	0.9	0.3	1.1	0.9	1.0
200%-299% of poverty	5.5	3.4	1.9	1.5	0.3	1.1	0.8	1.1
300% of poverty or more	11.1	8.8	5.3	3.5	0.4	1.1	0.5	1.4
Hispanic	40.8	16.7	8.1	8.6	1.7	9.8	8.8	14.0
0-99% of poverty	9.0	0.9	0.4	0.5	0.3	4.1	3.9	4.0
100%-149% of poverty	6.2	1.5	0.6	0.8	0.2	2.1	1.9	2.6
150%-199% of poverty	5.9	2.1	0.9	1.1	0.3	1.3	1.1	2.5
200%-299% of poverty	8.0	4.0	1.9	2.2	0.3	1.3	1.1	2.8
300% of poverty or more	11.6	8.3	4.3	4.0	0.6	1.1	0.7	2.1
Other	17.5	10.7	5.2	5.5	1.3	3.0	2.2	3.4
0-99% of poverty	2.4	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.0	0.9	0.8
100%-149% of poverty	1.5	0.5	0.2	0.3	0.1	0.5	0.5	0.4
150%-199% of poverty	1.5	0.7	0.3	0.4	0.1	0.3	0.3	0.4
200%-299% of poverty	2.7	1.7	0.8	0.9	0.2	0.4	0.3	0.6
300% of poverty or more	9.4	7.4	3.7	3.8	0.6	0.7	0.3	1.1
(percentage within race and poverty category)								
White	100.0%	69.6%	36.0%	33.6%	7.9%	13.8%	9.3%	13.2%
0-99% of poverty	100.0	16.0	8.5	7.5	13.8	44.7	39.7	30.3
100%-149% of poverty	100.0	32.9	16.8	16.1	11.9	33.3	27.0	27.3
150%-199% of poverty	100.0	49.2	22.6	26.6	10.6	24.0	18.0	22.9
200%-299% of poverty	100.0	65.7	32.0	33.7	9.7	14.0	8.9	16.1
300% of poverty or more	100.0	83.7	44.0	39.7	5.9	6.5	2.6	7.7
Black	100.0	49.7	28.1	21.6	5.2	30.1	25.2	20.9
0-99% of poverty	100.0	12.1	5.7	6.4	6.5	59.8	55.5	28.1
100%-149% of poverty	100.0	31.3	15.5	15.8	5.1	41.4	36.9	28.4
150%-199% of poverty	100.0	47.2	24.3	22.9	6.6	27.7	22.6	25.0
200%-299% of poverty	100.0	61.0	34.0	27.0	5.1	19.7	14.3	19.6
300% of poverty or more	100.0	79.3	47.6	31.8	3.9	10.1	4.8	12.2
Hispanic	100.0	41.0	20.0	21.0	4.2	23.9	21.5	34.3
0-99% of poverty	100.0	9.6	4.3	5.4	3.7	45.0	43.2	44.2
100%-149% of poverty	100.0	23.5	9.9	13.6	3.5	33.6	30.8	42.7
150%-199% of poverty	100.0	34.9	16.0	19.0	4.9	21.3	19.4	41.7
200%-299% of poverty	100.0	50.3	23.5	26.8	3.4	15.8	13.6	34.5
300% of poverty or more	100.0	71.2	37.1	34.1	5.1	9.4	6.2	18.3
Other	100.0	61.1	29.5	31.6	7.4	16.9	12.8	19.2
0-99% of poverty	100.0	16.6	7.9	8.7	10.4	41.8	38.5	35.9
100%-149% of poverty	100.0	34.4	15.8	18.6	9.9	36.0	31.2	27.9
150%-199% of poverty	100.0	47.0	21.4	25.6	8.1	22.9	19.0	27.4
200%-299% of poverty	100.0	60.3	27.5	32.7	7.1	14.8	9.8	23.2
300% of poverty or more	100.0	78.8	38.8	40.0	6.3	7.4	3.4	11.2

Source: Employee Benefit Research Institute estimates of the Current Population Survey, March 2006 Supplement.
Note: Details may not add to totals because individuals may receive coverage from more than one source.

Conclusion

This *Issue Brief* finds that many factors affect the likelihood of an individual having health insurance and the source of that coverage. These factors include the strength of the economy, demographics, and employment characteristics, all of which often vary by location. For example, work status and income play a dominant role in determining an individual's likelihood of having health insurance. In addition, age, gender, firm size, hours of work, occupation, and industry are all important determinants of an individual's likelihood of having coverage; however, these variables are also closely linked to employment status and income. Variations by race and ethnicity also are closely linked to employment status and income.

Recent trends in coverage also have been presented. The data indicate that while the percentage of uninsured individuals in the United States declined between the late 1990s and 2000, it has continued to increase since then. In 2005, there were 46.1 million individuals under age 65 without health insurance coverage, up from 39.6 million as recently as 2000. While an increasing percentage of individuals were covered by employment-based health benefits between 1994 and 2000, this trend has not continued because of the combination of rising health benefit costs and an economy that is not strong enough to reverse the trend away from those benefits. However, the year-to-year changes in the percentage of the population with various sources of health insurance coverage are relatively small, and employment-based coverage continues to be the dominant form of health insurance covering nearly 160 million individuals under age 65, representing 62 percent of that population.

Research illustrates the advantages to consumers of having health insurance and the benefits to employers of offering it. In general, the availability of health insurance allows consumers to avoid unnecessary pain and suffering and improves the quality of life, and employers report that offering benefits has a positive impact on worker recruitment, retention, health status, and productivity (Fronstin and Helman, 2003). Ultimately, the challenge is how to reduce substantially the number and percentage of the uninsured—especially at a time of rapidly rising health care costs, economic uncertainty, and limited or diminishing government resources.

Appendix—Current Population Survey

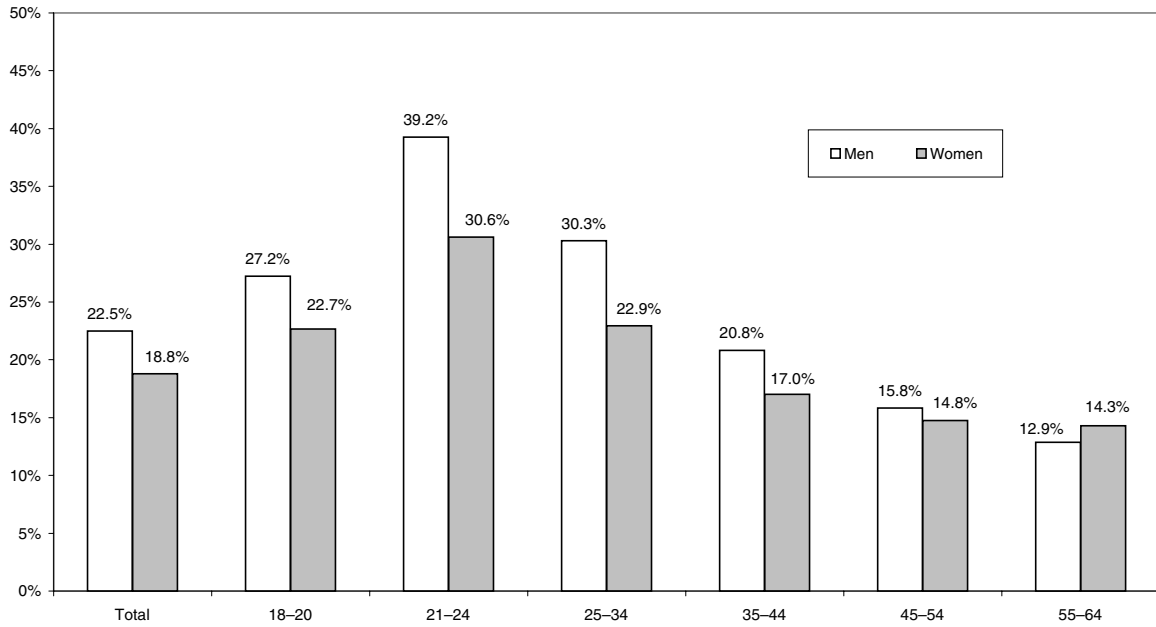
The data presented in this *Issue Brief* come from the March Supplement to the Current Population Survey (CPS), conducted by the Census Bureau (part of the U.S. Department of Commerce) for the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS, part of the U.S. Department of Labor) every month for more than 50 years. It is the primary source of data on labor force characteristics of the U.S. civilian noninstitutionalized population. It is also the official source of data on unemployment rates, poverty, and income in the United States. Approximately 57,000 households, representing 112,000 individuals, are interviewed each month.

Households are scientifically selected on the basis of geographic region of residence to collect data representative of the nation, individual states, and other specified areas. Eight panels are used to rotate the sample each month. This improves the reliability of estimates of month-to-month and year-to-year changes. A sample unit is interviewed for four consecutive months, and then is interviewed again for the same four months a year later. The unit is not interviewed during the eight months in between.

Theoretically, individuals can be followed over time. For example, approximately 50 percent of the sample interviewed in March of 2005 will have been re-interviewed in March 2006. But in practice, the survey does not re-interview *individuals*: Instead, the survey re-interviews the occupants of the *households* that were selected for inclusion in the sample. If the occupants of a household change over the course of the eight interviews, the new occupants in the household will take the place of the former occupants for the remaining interviews.

The first- and the fifth-month interviews are almost always conducted in person by an interviewer. More than 90 percent of the interviews conducted in months two through four and six through eight are conducted by telephone. Interviewers continue to visit households without telephones, with poor English-language skills, or that decline a telephone interview. Interviewers usually obtain responses from more than 93 percent of their eligible cases. The response rate varies by type of area and the mix of telephone versus personal-visit interviews.

Figure 23
Percentage Uninsured Among Individuals
Age 18–64, by Gender and Age, 2005



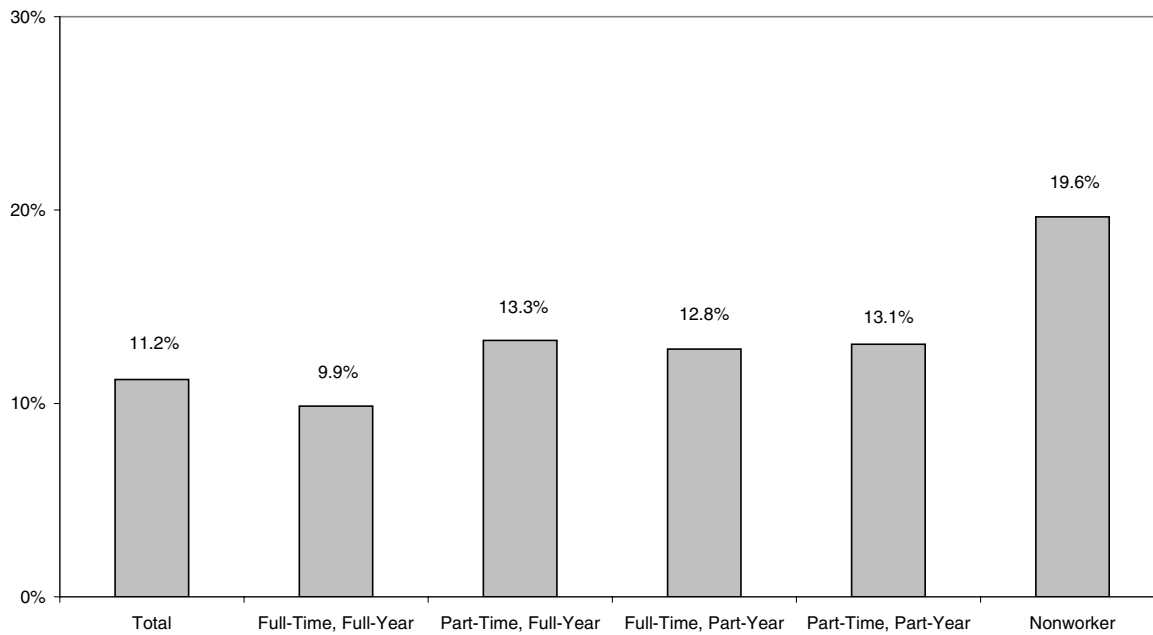
Source: Employee Benefit Research Institute estimates from the Current Population Survey, March 2006 Supplement.

Figure 24
Children With Selected Sources of Health Insurance, by Poverty Level, 2005

Poverty Level	Total	Employment-Based Coverage	Individually Purchased	Public		
				Total	Medicaid	Uninsured
(millions)						
Total	74.0	42.5	5.9	21.9	19.7	8.3
0–99% of poverty	13.6	1.6	1.1	9.1	8.9	2.6
100%–149% of poverty	7.7	2.3	0.6	3.9	3.7	1.5
150%–199% of poverty	7.9	3.7	0.7	2.9	2.7	1.2
200%–299% of poverty	13.3	8.6	1.2	3.1	2.6	1.5
300% of poverty or more	31.4	26.4	2.2	2.9	1.9	1.4
(percentage within coverage category)						
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
0–99% of poverty	18.4	3.8	18.3	41.6	44.9	31.6
100%–149% of poverty	10.5	5.4	10.6	17.9	18.9	17.5
150%–199% of poverty	10.7	8.6	12.7	13.3	13.6	15.0
200%–299% of poverty	18.0	20.1	20.3	14.0	13.2	18.5
300% of poverty or more	42.5	62.1	38.1	13.2	9.4	17.4
(percentage within poverty category)						
Total	100.0%	57.5%	7.9%	29.7%	26.7%	11.2%
0–99% of poverty	100.0	11.7	7.9	67.2	65.2	19.3
100%–149% of poverty	100.0	29.7	8.0	50.9	48.1	18.8
150%–199% of poverty	100.0	46.5	9.4	36.9	34.0	15.8
200%–299% of poverty	100.0	64.2	8.9	23.0	19.5	11.5
300% of poverty or more	100.0	84.1	7.1	9.2	5.9	4.6

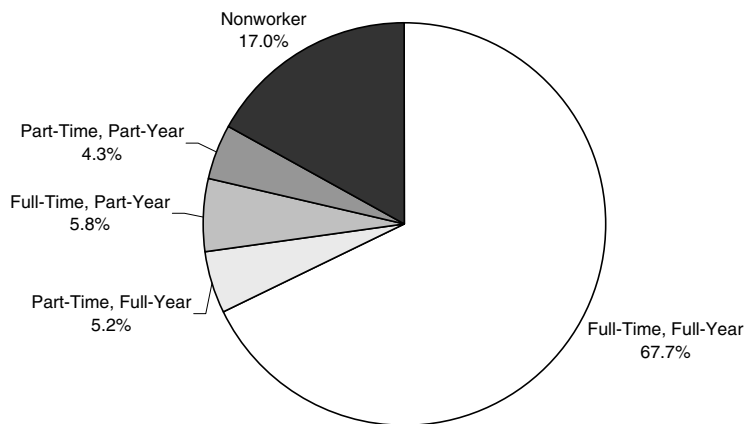
Source: Employee Benefit Research Institute estimates of the Current Population Survey, March 2006 Supplement.
 Note: Details may not add to totals because individuals may receive coverage from more than one source.

Figure 25
Percentage Uninsured Among Children Under Age 18, by Work Status of the Family Head, 2005



Source: Employee Benefit Research Institute estimates from the Current Population Survey, March 2006 Supplement.

Figure 26
Children Under Age 18 Without Health Insurance, by Work Status of the Family Head, 2005



Source: Employee Benefit Research Institute estimates from the Current Population Survey, March 2006 Supplement.

Since 1980, the supplement to the March CPS has included questions on health insurance coverage. Separate questions are asked about employment-based health insurance, health insurance purchased directly from an insurer, insurance from a source outside of the household, Medicare, Medicaid, Tricare, CHAMPVA, Indian Health Service, or other state-specific health programs for low-income uninsured individuals. These questions are asked of the household respondent, and potentially could miss nonrespondents, but the CPS also follows each question with a question about who else in the household is covered by the health plan.

Until recently, a question about being uninsured was never asked. Estimates of the uninsured were calculated as a residual; that is, persons were counted as being uninsured if they did not report having any type of health insurance coverage.

The questions on health insurance refer to the previous calendar year. For example, in March 2005, interviewers asked about health insurance coverage during 2004. Assuming that respondents answered the questions correctly, the uninsured estimate should represent the number of people who were uninsured for the entire previous calendar year. One measurement issue that arises in this structure is that individuals potentially are asked to recall the type of health insurance they had 14 months prior to being interviewed. A second issue is that some individuals do not understand the question and report the type of health insurance they have as of the interview date. Third, the CPS may not be picking up all Medicaid recipients because some states do not call the program Medicaid. In fact, there is strong evidence that the CPS under-reports Medicaid coverage, based on comparisons of these data with enrollment and participation data provided by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), the federal agency primarily responsible for administering Medicaid.

Because respondents are asked to provide information about all sources of health insurance coverage during the previous calendar year, some individuals reported having health insurance coverage from more than one source. It is not possible to determine when during the calendar year an individual was covered by multiple sources of health insurance. While these plans may have been held simultaneously, they were more likely held at different points during the year.

The CPS has undergone a number of changes over the years that affect the comparability of data in the time series. The remainder of this section discusses those changes.

In March 1988, the CPS questionnaire was substantially changed. Among the changes that were made, questions were added that inevitably picked up more people with health insurance coverage and reduced the number of uninsured in the survey (Moyer, 1989; and Swartz and Purcell, 1989). Prior to the March 1988 CPS, only employed persons were asked about employment-based health insurance. Starting with the March 1988 CPS, all persons ages 15 and older were asked about employment-based coverage. This change resulted in the identification of coverage for persons (and their families) covered by former employers through either retiree health benefits or COBRA (the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985).

Another major change in March 1988 affected the health insurance coverage of children. Questions were added about coverage from sources outside the household. Imputation methods for children's coverage were also revised to collect more accurate information about coverage type and policyholder. An additional set of questions was added to get more accurate information about children on Medicaid and those covered by a plan purchased directly from an insurer. Finally, weighting, programming, and processing improvements were made to the survey (Levit et al., 1992).

In March 1995, the CPS questionnaire was revised again. The Census Bureau utilized a more detailed set of health insurance questions designed to take advantage of computer-assisted survey interviewing collection (CASIC) technology. The order of the questions was changed, and the wording in some of the questions was changed. In addition, the sampling frame was changed, potentially complicating comparability of the estimates prior to March 1995 with those starting in or after March 1995. The new questions appear to have affected responses regarding the total number of respondents covered by employment-based health insurance coverage, individually purchased coverage, Tricare, and CHAMPVA. Questions on Medicare and Medicaid were also revised, but because estimates of Medicare and Medicaid from the CPS do not vary much from year to year even when the survey is unchanged, it is difficult to know how much the estimates were affected by changes to the survey and how much represents true changes. The longer-term trends in coverage are

likely to be representative of the true change, because the estimates do not change much from year to year. Swartz (1997) documents these data issues in greater detail.

In March 1998, the Census Bureau made another change in the CPS by modifying its definition of the population with Medicaid coverage. Previously, an individual reporting coverage from the Indian Health Service (IHS) only was counted as part of the Medicaid population. Beginning with the March 1998 CPS, individuals covered solely by IHS are counted as uninsured. This methodological change affected roughly 300,000 individuals. If this change had not taken place, the Medicaid population would have fallen by 0.9 percentage points between 1996 and 1997, instead of by 1.1 percentage points, and the uninsured would have increased to only 18.1 percent instead of 18.3 percent. Overall, this was a minor change to the uninsured estimates in the CPS.

In March 2000, the Census Bureau added a question to the CPS to verify whether or not a person was uninsured. In essence, anyone who did not report any health insurance coverage during 2000 was asked an additional question about whether they were uninsured. Those who reported that they had coverage were then asked about the type of coverage. The verification questions resulted in the Census Bureau providing a “corrected” estimate for the uninsured in 1999. As shown in table A.1, prior to the correction, 17.5 percent of the nonelderly population, representing 42.1 million individuals, were estimated to be uninsured in 1999. The verification questions resulted in a 7.4 percent decline in the number and percentage of nonelderly individuals without health insurance coverage in 1999. Most of the persons who would have been counted as uninsured under the old methodology are now counted as having either employment-based health insurance or having purchased health insurance directly from an insurer. Hence, the corrected estimate for the uninsured in 1999 is 16.2 percent, or 39 million, down from 17.5 percent, or 42.1 million.¹³

The verification questions were not asked prior to the March 2000 CPS. As a result, data prior to 1999 are not directly comparable with data after 1999. In order to provide roughly comparable estimates over time, the estimates of health insurance coverage for 1987–1998 in this report have been recalculated using the one-time percentage change in the 1999 health insurance coverage estimates shown in Figure A1.

In 2001, two changes were made to the CPS. First, the sample was expanded to improve state estimates of S-CHIP enrollees. Overall, this change increased the uninsured estimate from 14 percent of the population to 14.1 percent, which accounted for an increase of nearly 200,000 persons uninsured (Mills, 2002). However, the change in the uninsured percentage varied significantly from state to state, ranging from a 1.8 percentage point increase in Connecticut to a 2 percentage point decline in Vermont. The Census Bureau also introduced Census 2000-based weights starting with the March 2002 CPS and provided new estimates for the March 2000 and March 2001 CPS that are based on the new weights. When using the Census 1990-based weights for the March 2001 CPS, 15.8 percent of the nonelderly population, or 38.4 million people, were uninsured (Figure A2). However, when using the Census 2000-based weights, 16.1 percent of the nonelderly population is estimated to be uninsured, representing 39.4 million people. The S-CHIP sample expansion combined with an Hispanic sample expansion each March results in 99,000 households interviewed for the survey, representing 211,000 individuals.

Finally, in August 2006, the Census Bureau released a revised March 2005 CPS dataset. Its 2004 data were revised to reflect a correction to the weights and the estimates were revised based on improvements to the methodology that assigns health insurance coverage to dependents. As a result, the 2004 data published in previous EBRI reports have been updated in this report.

Duration of Coverage

Data from the March CPS do not allow researchers to determine the length of time that an individual is insured or uninsured. The Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), another survey conducted by the Census Bureau, allows longitudinal analysis of the uninsured. Copeland (1998) found that 37 percent of the uninsured population was uninsured for one to four months, 22 percent was uninsured for five to eight months, 9 percent was uninsured for nine to 11 months, and 33 percent was uninsured for 12 months or longer. Similarly, Bennefield (1998) found that 29 percent of all uninsured spells lasted 5.3 months or longer. These data would seem to indicate that even though many individuals may lose health insurance during any given month, the majority remain uninsured for a short time, and may even be eligible for coverage under COBRA or various state continuation-of-coverage laws.

Figure A1

Change in the Number and Percentage of Nonelderly Individuals With Selected Sources of Health Insurance Due to Change in CPS Methodology for Counting the Uninsured, 1999

	Millions of Individuals, by Coverage Type		Percentage of Individuals, by Coverage Type		Change in Estimate Due to New Methodology
	Old methodology	New methodology	Old methodology	New methodology	
Total Population	240.7	240.7	100.0%	100.0%	0.0%
Employment-based coverage	158.4	160.3	65.8	66.6	1.2
Own name	80.3	81.4	33.4	33.8	1.4
Dependent coverage	78.1	78.9	32.4	32.8	1.1
Individually Purchased	15.8	16.6	6.6	6.9	5.2
Public	34.1	34.5	14.2	14.3	1.1
Medicare	4.8	4.9	2.0	2.0	0.4
Medicaid	25.0	25.3	10.4	10.5	1.3
Tricare/CHAMPVA ^a	6.5	6.6	2.7	2.7	0.5
No Health Insurance	42.1	39.0	17.5	16.2	-7.4

Source: Employee Benefit Research Institute estimates of the Current Population Survey, March 2000 Supplement.

Note: Details may not add to totals because individuals may receive coverage from more than one source.

^a TRICARE (formerly known as CHAMPUS) is a program administered by the Department of Defense for military retirees as well as families of active duty, retired, and deceased service members. CHAMPVA, the Civilian Health and Medical Program for the Department of Veterans Affairs, is a health care benefits program for disabled dependents of veterans and certain survivors of veterans.

Figure A2

Change in the Number and Percentage of Nonelderly Individuals With Selected Sources of Health Insurance Due to Introduction of Census 2000-Based Weights, 2000

	Millions of Individuals, by Coverage Type		Change in Population Estimate Due to New Weights	Percentage of Individuals, by Coverage Type		Change in Insurance Status Estimate Due to New Weights
	Census 1990-based weights	Census 2000-based weights		Census 1990-based weights	Census 2000-based weights	
Total Population	242.8	244.8	0.9%	100.0%	100.0%	0.0%
Employment-based coverage	163.4	164.4	0.6	67.3	67.1	-0.3
Own name	83.7	84.8	1.3	34.5	34.6	0.4
Dependent coverage	79.7	79.6	-0.2	32.8	32.5	-1.0
Individually Purchased	16.1	16.1	-0.1	6.6	6.6	-0.9
Public	34.3	34.6	0.8	14.1	14.1	-0.1
Medicare	5.3	5.3	0.7	2.2	2.2	-0.2
Medicaid	25.3	25.5	0.8	10.4	10.4	0.0
Tricare/CHAMPVA ^a	6.2	6.2	-0.8	2.6	2.5	-1.6
No Health Insurance	38.4	39.4	2.5	15.8	16.1	1.6

Source: Employee Benefit Research Institute estimates of the Current Population Survey, March 2001 Supplement.

Note: Details may not add to totals because individuals may receive coverage from more than one source.

^a TRICARE (formerly known as CHAMPUS) is a program administered by the Department of Defense for military retirees as well as families of active duty, retired, and deceased service members. CHAMPVA, the Civilian Health and Medical Program for the Department of Veterans Affairs, is a health care benefits program for disabled dependents of veterans and certain survivors of veterans.

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Endnotes

¹ The estimate for Medicaid also includes children enrolled in the State Children’s Health Insurance Program (S-CHIP). Medicaid and S-CHIP (and Medicare) estimates are under-reported in the CPS, according to comparisons of these data with enrollment and participation data provided by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) (DeNavas-Walt, Proctor, and Lee, 2006). According to Hoffman and Holahan (2005), the CPS may be overestimating the number of uninsured individuals by between 3.6 million and 9.1 million because of the undercount in Medicaid enrollment.

² Tricare (formerly known as CHAMPUS) is a program administered by the Department of Defense for military retirees as well as families of active duty, retired, and deceased service members. CHAMPVA, the Civilian Health and Medical Program for the Department of Veterans Affairs, is a health care benefits program for disabled dependents of veterans and certain survivors of veterans.

³ The uninsured estimates from the March CPS are supposed to represent the percentage of individuals without health insurance coverage during an entire calendar year. However, based on comparisons with other surveys, many researchers concur that the uninsured estimate from the CPS is closer to a point-in-time estimate than a calendar year

estimate. If the CPS is a point-in-time estimate and not a calendar year, it would mean that the data from the March 2006 CPS represent the number of uninsured during March 2006 instead of during the previous calendar year. More information about the CPS, and other surveys that collect data on the uninsured, can be found in Fronstin (2000c). See also Bhandari (2004) and U.S. Congressional Budget Office (2004).

⁴ Expansion in S-CHIP during the late 1990s may have offset the decline in Medicaid coverage.

⁵ In this report, individuals who receive coverage directly through their employer, union, or a previous employer are categorized as having coverage in their *own name*. Individuals who receive employment-based coverage indirectly are categorized as having *dependent* coverage.

⁶ It has been estimated that 95 percent of low-income children are eligible for either Medicaid or S-CHIP. See www.cbpp.org/12-6-00schip.htm (last reviewed August 2006).

⁷ The percentage of uninsured workers eligible for health benefits through a family member is not included in this estimate.

⁸ The region and state data in this section are not based on the most recent 2005 data, but instead based on a three-year average of 2003–2005 data. The Census Bureau recommends using three-year averages to compare estimates across states. State estimates are considerably less reliable than national estimates and fluctuate more widely year-to-year than national estimates.

⁹ See Fronstin (2005a).

¹⁰ Both Fronstin (2005b) and Cooper and Schone (1997) found that young workers are less likely than older workers to be covered by employment-based health benefits even when a plan is offered to them.

¹¹ Krauss et al. (1999) found that 55.7 percent of the uninsured had at least one ambulatory medical care visit in 1996, compared with 76.2 percent of individuals with only public insurance and 77.2 percent of individuals with any private insurance. They also found that among persons with at least one visit, the uninsured had an average of 5.1 visits, compared with 8.7 visits by persons with only public insurance and 6.5 visits by those with any private insurance. Another study found that among persons visiting a health care provider, 17 percent of the uninsured received health care in an emergency room, compared with 9 percent of the privately insured (Cunningham and Whitmore, 1998). Furthermore, Fronstin (1998 and 2000a) found that 22 percent of the uninsured were in a family where someone had difficulty obtaining needed care, compared with 10–11 percent of the insured population, mainly because they could not afford health care.

¹² Traditionally, cost shifting occurs when a health care provider raises its prices to one set of payers because it lowered them to another set (Morrisey, 1996).

¹³ See Nelson and Mills (2001) for additional information about the verification questions.

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