

Contact: Tracey Young, EBRI, (202) 775-6329, young@ebri.org

Fast Facts from EBRI:

Worker Occupations and the Decline of Employment-Based Health Coverage During the Recession

WASHINGTON—How did the recent recession affect the health coverage of workers in various job categories?

According to a report from the nonpartisan Employee Benefit Research Institute (EBRI), workers in nearly all broadly defined occupations experienced a statistically significant decline in health coverage between 2008 and 2009.

The analysis uses data from 2008 and 2009 that were collected in the U.S. Census Bureau's March 2009 and March 2010 Current Population Survey following the 2007–2009 recession. The full report appears in the April 2011 *EBRI Issue Brief*, "The Impact of the 2007–2009 Recession on Workers' Health Coverage," online at www.ebri.org

Here is additional information from the study:

- The percentage of managerial and professional specialty workers with coverage from their own job fell from 66.1 percent to 65.4 percent between 2008 and 2009.
- The percentage of workers in service occupations with coverage from their own job fell from 33.9 percent to 32.4 percent; coverage among workers in sales and office occupations fell from 50.5 percent to 49.6 percent; coverage among construction, extraction, and maintenance workers fell from 48.3 percent to 46.1 percent; and coverage among workers in production, transportation, and material moving occupations fell from 55 percent to 52.9 percent.
- However, the decline from 22.9 percent to 20.3 percent among workers in farming, fishing, and forestry was not statistically significant.

During a recession, some employers will drop coverage, some will increase the worker share of the premium, and some may change eligibility requirements. Structural changes in the economy during a recession, such as the substitution of part-time workers for full-time workers, reduce the number of workers eligible for health benefits. This reflects the fact that while unemployment is rising, an increasing share of workers may decline coverage for a number of reasons.

###

Fast Facts from EBRI is issued by the nonpartisan Employee Benefit Research Institute to highlight benefits information that may be of current interest. Established in 1978, EBRI is an independent nonprofit organization committed exclusively to data dissemination, policy research, and education on economic security and employee benefits. EBRI does not take policy positions and does not lobby.