

# CRS Report for Congress

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## Health Insurance Coverage: Characteristics of the Insured and Uninsured Populations in 2000

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### Summary

Nearly one of out seven Americans — 38.7 million people (14.0%) — were without health insurance for all of 2000. This was the second consecutive annual decrease in the percentage of uninsured. The largest gain in health insurance coverage was in employment-based coverage. In 2000, approximately 3.7 million more Americans were covered by employment-based health insurance than in 1999.<sup>1</sup> Nationwide, there was no significant change in the percentage of Americans covered by Medicare or by other nonmilitary public health insurance, such as Medicaid. While employment-based health insurance covers many Americans, more than half of the uninsured were full-time, full-year workers or their dependents. This report examines characteristics of both the insured and the uninsured populations in the United States. It will be updated annually.

### Health Insurance Coverage and Selected Population Characteristics

**Age.** Table 1 provides a breakdown of health insurance coverage by type of insurance and age. In 2000, compared to other age groups, those under age 5 were most likely (25%) to have coverage through Medicaid, the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), or some other program for low-income individuals. Young adults ages 19 to 24 were the most likely to have gone without health insurance for the entire year. While many in this group (60%) were covered under an employment-based plan, 29% had no health insurance. Young adults are often too old to be covered as dependents on their

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<sup>1</sup> Comparisons to 1999 are from unpublished numbers produced by CRS using revised CPS data. The U.S. Census Bureau released revised data resulting from a verification question asked of those who were initially categorized as uninsured. For more information on this and other issues regarding estimates of the uninsured, see CRS Report RL31275, *Health Insurance: Federal Data Sources for Analyses of the Uninsured*, by Chris L. Peterson and Christine Devere.

parents' policies and, as entry-level workers, do not have strong ties to the work force. In addition, some may choose to remain uninsured and spend their money on other items. After age 25, the percentage of people with health insurance increases. Of those age 65 and over, 96% were covered by Medicare, and less than 1% were uninsured for the entire year. The remainder of this report focuses on the population under age 65.

**Table 1. Health Insurance Coverage by Type of Insurance and Age, 2000**

Age	Population (in millions)	Type of insurance <sup>a</sup>					
		Employment based <sup>b</sup>	Private nongroup	Medicare	Medicaid or other public <sup>c</sup>	Military <sup>d</sup>	Uninsured
Under 5	19.8	64.0%	3.9%	0.8%	25.0%	3.1%	10.9%
5-18	56.9	68.5	5.1	0.7	18.2	2.9	12.3
19-24	22.9	60.0	5.7	0.6	8.0	2.8	28.8
25-34	37.4	69.1	5.3	1.1	6.3	2.2	21.2
35-54	82.8	75.9	6.5	2.6	5.2	2.8	13.9
55-61	17.8	69.9	10.7	6.6	6.6	3.3	13.8
62-64	6.0	61.3	14.9	14.8	7.3	5.1	13.3
65+	33.0	34.5	31.4	96.2	10.0	4.2	0.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>276.6</b>	<b>65.6%</b>	<b>9.2%</b>	<b>13.4%</b>	<b>10.4%</b>	<b>3.0%</b>	<b>14.0%</b>

**Source:** Congressional Research Service (CRS) analysis of data from the March 2001 Current Population Survey (CPS).

<sup>a</sup> People may have more than one source of health insurance; percentages may total to more than 100.

<sup>b</sup> Group health insurance through employer or union.

<sup>c</sup> Nonmilitary. Includes State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) and other state programs for low-income individuals.

<sup>d</sup> Military health care or veterans coverage.

**Other Demographic Characteristics.** Table 2 shows the rate of health insurance coverage by type of insurance and selected demographic characteristics — race, family type, region, poverty level and citizenship — *for people under age 65*. In 2000, whites were most likely to have health insurance (89%) for some part of the year, while Hispanics were least likely (66%). The rate of employment-based health coverage was highest among whites (77%), and the rate of public coverage<sup>2</sup> was highest among blacks (22%).

People in male-headed or two-parent families with children were more likely to be insured (87%) than those in female-headed families with children (80%) or in families with no children (81%). The sources of coverage were quite different for male-present (one or two parents) and female-headed (single parent) families with children: Coverage was employment based for 76% of male-present families compared to 48% of female-headed families; 9% of male-present families had public coverage compared to 34% of female-headed families.

<sup>2</sup> Includes Medicare, Medicaid, the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), or some other program for low-income individuals. Excludes military and veterans coverage.

People were more likely to have insurance if they lived in the Midwest (88%) or the Northeast (87%), than if they lived in the South (82%) or West (81%). More than 70% of those living in the Northeast and Midwest had employment-based health insurance compared to 67% in the South and 65% in the West. Among individuals with incomes at least two times the poverty level, 90% had health insurance compared to 67% of the poor (i.e., those with incomes below the poverty level). Only 23% of the poor received health coverage through employment, and 43% had public coverage. More than 80% of people with incomes at least two times the poverty level were covered through an employer, and only 4% had public coverage.

**Table 2. Health Insurance Coverage by Type of Insurance and Demographic Characteristics for People Under Age 65, 2000**

	Population (in millions)	Type of insurance <sup>a</sup>			
		Employment based <sup>b</sup>	Public <sup>c</sup>	Other <sup>d</sup>	Uninsured
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>					
White	166.9	76.9%	8.4%	9.9%	11.3%
Black	32.1	58.4	22.0	7.9	19.6
Hispanic	32.0	47.2	19.0	4.5	33.6
Other	12.6	63.6	12.5	9.1	20.7
<b>Family type</b>					
Female-headed with children	28.0	48.3	34.3	4.5	19.6
Male or two parent headed w/children	119.1	75.7	9.3	8.6	12.6
No children	96.5	69.0	8.3	10.4	18.6
<b>Region</b>					
Northeast	45.6	73.4	12.8	6.6	13.0
Midwest	56.3	75.6	10.1	8.1	12.1
South	84.9	67.3	11.5	10.0	17.9
West	56.9	65.2	13.0	9.7	18.5
<b>Poverty level<sup>d</sup></b>					
Less than 100% of poverty	28.3	23.3	43.3	6.0	32.9
100%-149% of poverty	20.0	41.3	27.6	7.7	30.1
150%-199% of poverty	20.5	57.8	16.5	9.7	23.5
200%+ of poverty	174.7	82.1	4.3	9.4	10.5
<b>Citizenship</b>					
Native	216.9	72.0	12.1	9.1	13.4
Naturalized	9.0	67.1	8.2	10.4	19.7
Non-Citizens	17.6	45.3	9.9	5.1	42.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>243.6</b>	<b>69.9%</b>	<b>11.8%</b>	<b>8.9%</b>	<b>15.8%</b>

**Source:** Congressional Research Service (CRS) analysis of data from the March 2001 CPS.

<sup>a</sup> People may have more than one source of coverage; percentages may total to more than 100.

<sup>b</sup> Group health insurance through employer or union.

<sup>c</sup> Includes Medicare, Medicaid, the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), and other state programs for low-income individuals. Excludes military and veterans coverage.

<sup>d</sup> Private nongroup health insurance, veterans coverage, or military health care.

<sup>e</sup> In 2000, the weighted average poverty threshold for a family of four was \$17,603.

People born with U.S. citizenship (i.e., “native”) were more likely to have health insurance than non-citizens — 87% versus 57%, respectively. Non-citizens accounted for 7% of the population under 65, but were 20% of the uninsured. About 45% of non-citizens were covered through employment, compared to 72% of citizens.

**Employment Characteristics.** For the second year in a row, the increase in employment-based coverage was statistically significant — from 69% in 1999 to 70% in 2000.<sup>3</sup> **Table 3** shows the rate of health insurance coverage by employment characteristics for people under age 65 who were workers or their dependents. In 2000, about 92% of workers and dependents of workers in large firms (1,000 or more employees) were insured compared to 73% in small firms (less than 10 employees). People in small firms and their dependents accounted for 16% of the under 65 population but 27% of the uninsured. Insurance coverage varied according to industry, as well. Agriculture and personal services had the highest proportion of uninsured workers and dependents — more than 30%; only 4% of those in public administration were uninsured. Among workers, 87% of those employed full time, full year had health insurance, most often through their employment (69%). More than 25% of workers with less than full time, full year employment were uninsured for all of 2000. In fact, the percentage of uninsured individuals among those who were not in the labor force (26%) was lower than for workers with only part time or part year employment (27%).<sup>4</sup>

**Table 3. Health Insurance Coverage by Employment Characteristics<sup>a</sup> for People Under Age 65, 2000**

	Population (in millions)	Type of insurance <sup>b</sup>			
		From own job <sup>c</sup>	From other's job <sup>c</sup>	Other <sup>d</sup>	Uninsured
<b>Firm size<sup>e</sup></b>					
Under 10	38.6	18.0%	32.8%	26.8%	27.1%
10-24	19.3	28.6	34.0	17.6	24.2
25-99	28.6	35.2	37.7	15.4	16.7
100-499	30.1	42.3	39.8	12.9	10.9
500-999	11.7	45.0	38.6	11.6	9.7
1,000 +	90.5	44.1	39.9	14.0	8.4
<b>Industry<sup>e</sup></b>					
Agriculture	5.3	15.7%	26.9%	30.5%	31.8%
Mining	1.2	35.5	49.2	11.2	9.0
Construction	17.2	25.9	35.4	16.8	26.1
Durable goods	22.5	42.8	43.1	10.2	8.9
Nondurable goods	14.2	40.8	41.4	12.4	11.4
Transportation	17.6	41.4	42.1	11.3	10.6
Wholesale trade	9.4	38.3	42.7	11.8	12.1
Retail trade	30.9	28.4	32.8	21.0	22.7
Finance/insurance	14.5	40.6	42.1	14.8	8.0

<sup>3</sup> At the 0.001 level of statistical significance.

<sup>4</sup> At the 0.05 level of statistical significance.

	Population (in millions)	Type of insurance <sup>b</sup>			
		From own job <sup>c</sup>	From other's job <sup>c</sup>	Other <sup>d</sup>	Uninsured
<b>Industry<sup>e</sup></b>					
Business services	15.9	31.4	33.4	19.4	20.5
Personal services	6.0	22.9	25.9	24.5	31.7
Entertainment	3.3	35.0	34.5	16.4	19.1
Professional serv.	48.2	43.1	38.0	15.2	9.6
Public admin.	12.7	43.0	40.0	25.4	3.9
<b>Labor force attachment</b>					
<b>Workers</b>					
Full time, full year	98.4	68.9	12.7	9.8	13.3
Part time, full year	7.3	41.4	18.0	21.3	25.2
Full time, part year	15.6	52.0	9.4	17.9	27.3
Part time, part year	6.0	25.6	20.1	29.9	30.2
<b>Dependents<sup>a</sup></b>					
Full time, full year	79.1	0.0	77.2	18.2	10.7
Part time, full year	3.1	0.0	45.3	40.5	21.6
Full time, part year	7.2	0.0	44.7	44.3	20.0
Part time, part year	2.2	0.0	25.8	63.9	18.4
<b>Not in labor force</b>	24.7	15.9 <sup>f</sup>	12.5 <sup>f</sup>	51.9	26.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>243.6</b>	<b>34.6%</b>	<b>35.2%</b>	<b>20.1%</b>	<b>15.8%</b>

**Source:** Congressional Research Service (CRS) analysis of data from the March 2001 CPS.

<sup>a</sup> For dependents, employment characteristics are for the person providing dependent coverage under employment-based or private insurance. If other coverage, characteristics are from the head of household or spouse if head not employed.

<sup>b</sup> People may have more than one source of health insurance.

<sup>c</sup> Group health insurance through employer or union.

<sup>d</sup> Medicare, Medicaid, the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), nongroup health insurance, veterans coverage, and other government coverage.

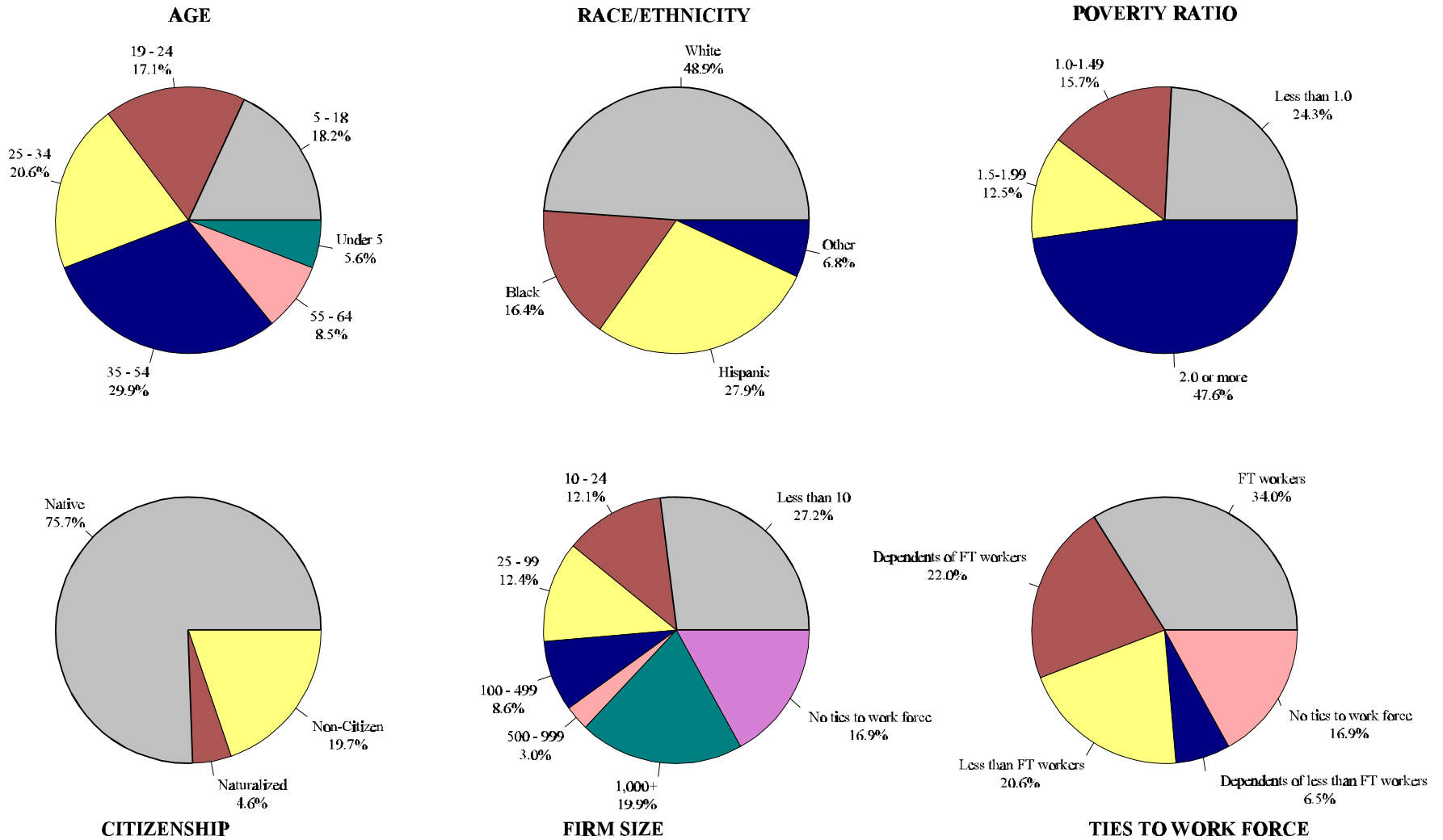
<sup>e</sup> For persons who worked and their dependents.

<sup>f</sup> Person was retired, disabled, or answered questions inconsistently.

## Characteristics of the Uninsured Population under Age 65

People who lack health insurance differ from the population as a whole: They are more likely to be young adults, poor, Hispanic, or employees in small firms. **Figure 1** illustrates selected characteristics of those under age 65 who were uninsured for all of 2000. More than 17% of the uninsured were 19 to 24 years old, even though this age group represents less than 9% of the under 65 population. For the first time since 1994, when CRS first began this annual analysis, the percentage of the uninsured who are white fell below 50%. Also for the first time since 1994, more than three-quarters of the uninsured were above the poverty level. Still, the poor accounted for 12% of the under 65 population but represented 24% of the uninsured. About 76% of the uninsured were native citizens, and 27% worked or were dependents of workers in small firms (less than 10 employees). More than half (56%) were full time, full year workers or their dependents; 27% had less than full time attachment to the labor force; and 17% had no labor force ties.

**Figure 1. Characteristics of the Uninsured Population Under Age 65, 2000**



**Source:** Congressional Research Service (CRS) analysis of data from the March 2001 Current Population Survey (CPS).

**Note:** Totals may not sum to 100% due to rounding. "FT workers" represent full-time, full-year workers.