



Lack of Health Insurance Concentrated Among Working-Age Ohioans: New Census data highlights need for comprehensive health reform

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(Cleveland, OH) More than one in five working age adults in Ohio's cities did not have health insurance coverage in 2008, according to health insurance data the Census Bureau released today. These findings and the expectation that the situation will worsen in 2009 highlight the need to enact comprehensive health care reform.

In Ohio, more than 1.1 million working age adults, 15.8 percent of the population, were uninsured in 2008. The problem is more pronounced in Ohio's cities, with more than 38,000 adults or 20.7 percent under age 65 uninsured in Cincinnati, 70,000 or 28.1 percent in Cleveland, and 95,000 or 19.4 percent in Columbus. In Canton, nearly one-third of working age adults reported having no insurance coverage.

Adults age 18-64 without health insurance, 2008		
	Number	Percent
All Ohio	1,117,473	15.8%
Akron	30,141	23.6%
Canton	12,584	29.8%
Cincinnati	38,576	20.7%
Cleveland	70,287	28.1%
Columbus	95,868	19.4%
Dayton	22,398	23.8%
Lorain	8,887	22.8%
Parma	6,593	13.0%
Toledo	35,228	20.0%
Youngstown	9,432	24.0%

In the face of rising unemployment, it appears that the employer-based health system is disintegrating in Ohio. In our cities, this means that more adults will turn to emergency rooms to receive treatment, and the cost of this uncompensated care is passed along to those Ohioans who have insurance.

The data were released today on the Census Bureau's Website www.Census.gov and represent the first time data on health coverage is available on the sub-state level. Data is available for cities with populations greater than 65,000.

Proposals before Congress would raise eligibility for Medicaid to 133 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (\$14,404 for a single adult) meaning that most childless adults would be eligible for Medicaid for the first time. It would also be an expansion of eligibility for parents, who are currently eligible if their income is under 90 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (an eligibility expansion from \$19,845 for a family of four to \$29,327).

The number of uninsured in Ohio is likely to be much higher in 2009 because of accelerated job loss in the state resulting from the recession. Ohio lost more than 50,000 jobs in 2008 compared to late 2007, and has already lost an additional 245,000 jobs through July of this year.

In short, today's numbers are a reminder that millions of Ohioans cannot wait for comprehensive health reform. Congress must act this year to make sure more Ohioans have access to affordable, quality health coverage.

The Center for Community Solutions is a private, independent, nonprofit organization focused on policy and system reform. It provides strategic leadership to improve targeted health, social, and economic conditions. Established in 1913, it is a United Way agency.

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