

CRS Report for Congress

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Health Insurance: Uninsured by State, 2001

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Summary

An estimated 14.6% of the U.S. population lacked health insurance coverage in 2001, up from 14.2% in 2000. When examined by state, estimates of the percent uninsured ranged from a low of 7.5% in Iowa to a high of 23.5% in Texas. Generally, states in the Midwest and New England have lower rates of uninsured, while states in the Southwestern and Southern portions of the nation have higher shares of their populations without coverage.

These state-level estimates are based on the March 2002 Current Population Survey (CPS), and must be interpreted with caution because they are based on a survey sample. When sampling variation is taken into account, to allow one to say with 90% reliability that the percent uninsured in the state lies between specified low and high estimates, the uninsured rate in 3 states is not different statistically from the uninsured rate nationwide. The uninsured rate is statistically lower than the national rate in 31 states and the District of Columbia, and statistically higher in the remaining 16 states.

State-level analysis is only one way to examine data about health insurance coverage. Some factors related to the percent of a state's population that is uninsured may be affected by the state, such as eligibility criteria for the state's Medicaid and State Children's Health Insurance programs or other programs for those lacking health insurance. Other factors may be beyond the state's direct control, such as the willingness of employers to offer coverage and the financial resources of the state's population to purchase coverage.

This report will be updated annually, when new data become available. For related information, see CRS Report 96-891, *Health Insurance Coverage: Characteristics of Insured and Uninsured in 2001*, and CRS Report 97-310, *Health Insurance: Uninsured Children by State, 1999-2001*.

Estimates of The Uninsured by State

An estimated 14.6% of the U.S. population lack health insurance coverage in 2001, up from 14.2% in 2000.¹ **Table 1** shows that the estimated percent of each state's population that lacked health insurance² coverage in 2001 ranged from a low of 7.5% in Iowa to a high of 23.5% in Texas. Thirteen states³ had estimated uninsured rates less than 10% and 2 states⁴ had estimated rates greater than 20%. Generally, states with the lowest rates of uninsurance were located in the Midwest and Northeast; states with the highest rates were in the Southwest and South (**Figure 1**).

These estimates of the percent of the state population without health insurance coverage are based on data from the March 2002 Current Population Survey (CPS). The CPS is representative of the civilian, noninstitutionalized population, and is designed to produce reliable estimates at the national, regional and state level.

The small sample sizes available from the CPS for many states make it prudent to consider state-level estimates in terms of a range of values. This range is based on sampling theory, and takes into account the size of the sample. **Table 1** shows the best point estimates, or single values, for the numbers of people covered and not covered by health insurance, and the percent uninsured by state.⁵ The table also reports a range in values for these numbers and percentages. The size of the range depends primarily upon the sample size. **Table 1** shows ranges based on a 90% confidence interval. A 90% confidence interval means that given repeated sampling of health insurance coverage in a state, 9 out of 10 times, the estimate of the percent uninsured (or number covered or not covered) will lie within the range set by the low and high estimates. For example, if one surveys people in Iowa about health insurance coverage, in 9 out of 10 sample surveys, on average, the percent uninsured in Iowa will be between 6.8% and 8.2%.⁶

Because of the uncertainty about state-level estimates of the percent uninsured, a more statistically conservative comparison across states takes ranges of values into

¹ This report uses population estimates based on the 2000 Census instead of 1990 Census. The CPS for 2001 also includes an expanded sample of households. Due to these changes, rates of uninsured in this report are not comparable to any previous version of this report.

² Health insurance includes, but is not limited to: Medicare; Medicaid; S-CHIP; TRICARE or the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Uniformed Services (CHAMPUS); the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veteran's Affairs (CHAMPVA); Veteran's Administration health care; military health care; other government provided health care; employer/union-provided insurance; and privately purchased insurance.

³ Iowa (7.5%), Rhode Island (7.7%), Wisconsin (7.7%), Minnesota (8.0%), Massachusetts (8.2%), Delaware (9.2%), Pennsylvania (9.2%), South Dakota (9.3%), New Hampshire (9.4%), Nebraska (9.5%), Hawaii (9.6%), North Dakota (9.6%), and Vermont (9.6%).

⁴ New Mexico (20.7%), and Texas (23.5%).

⁵ **Table 1** shows states sorted by the percent uninsured. **Table 2** reports the same data but sorts states alphabetically.

⁶ Note that there is no way to determine if the results for Iowa in **Table 1** are the 1 time out of 10 that a different result is obtained, where the real percent uninsured is outside the confidence interval (i.e., less than 6.8% or greater than 8.2%).

account. This is done in **Figure 2**, which groups states according to differences from the nationwide percent uninsured, considering the estimated ranges in the percent uninsured by state. When statistical variation is taken into account, 3 states have percents uninsured that are *not statistically different* from the nationwide rate of 14.6%. (The nationwide percent uninsured has a range in estimates of between 14.4% and 14.8%.) These 3 states have percents uninsured ranging from a low point estimate of 13.6% in Montana (with a range in estimates between 12.6% and 14.6%) to a high point estimate of 14.8% in Utah (with a range in estimates between 14.0% and 15.6%.) Thirty-one states and the District of Columbia have percents uninsured that are statistically lower than the nationwide rate. These states include all states in New England and the Midwest, a few states in the eastern United States, as well as Washington, Oregon and Hawaii. The remaining 16 states, arrayed across the South and Southwest from Mississippi to California, as well as Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Wyoming, Alaska and New York, have uninsured rates that are statistically higher than the nationwide rate.

Reasons for Differences in the Percent Uninsured

Figures 1 and 2 indicate that residents of the Southern and Southwestern United States are more likely to lack health insurance and residents of the Midwest and New England are more likely to be covered. Various state characteristics may account for these differences. Nationwide, the percent uninsured is related to employment by industry, with workers in manufacturing of durable goods, professional services, finance/insurance, and public administration industries most often covered by health insurance and those employed in agriculture, and personal services least often covered. Employees who work for large firms, and their dependents, are more likely to be covered than those who work for small firms. Union members are more likely to be covered. The prevalence of particular industries, firm sizes, or unionization may account for some of the regional or state variation in percents uninsured.⁷

Some factors related to the percent of a state's population that is uninsured may be affected by state's policies, such as eligibility criteria for the state's Medicaid program or the State Children's Health Insurance Program. Other factors may be beyond the state's direct control, such as the willingness of employers to offer coverage and the financial resources of the state's population to purchase coverage. Only Hawaii has implemented state legislation mandating that an employer offer coverage, which is augmented with a health insurance program for the unemployed.⁸

⁷ For additional information, see CRS Report 96-891, *Health Insurance Coverage: Characteristics of the Insured and Uninsured Populations in 2001*, by Chris Peterson.

⁸ Hawaii received a congressional exemption from the Federal Employee Retirement and Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA) to permit the employer mandate. No other state has received a similar exemption.

Table 1. Number of People Covered and Not Covered by Health Insurance, and Percent Not Covered, By State, 2001

Sorted by Percent Uninsured (numbers in thousands)

	Number covered			Number not covered			Percent not covered			
	Point	Range		Point	Range		Point	Range		
	estimate	Low	High	estimate	Low	High	estimate	Low	High	
Iowa	2,645	2,581	2,709	216	198	234	7.5%	*	6.8%	8.2%
Rhode Island	963	942	984	80	73	87	7.7%	*	7.2%	8.2%
Wisconsin	4,927	4,817	5,037	409	378	440	7.7%	*	7.0%	8.4%
Minnesota	4,530	4,426	4,634	392	361	423	8.0%	*	7.3%	8.7%
Massachusetts	5,802	5,677	5,927	520	482	558	8.2%	*	7.7%	8.7%
Delaware	719	699	739	73	66	80	9.2%	*	8.5%	9.9%
Pennsylvania	10,983	10,805	11,161	1,119	1,061	1,177	9.2%	*	8.7%	9.7%
South Dakota	670	654	686	69	64	74	9.3%	*	8.6%	10.0%
New Hampshire	1,139	1,113	1,165	119	111	127	9.4%	*	8.7%	10.1%
Nebraska	1,523	1,484	1,562	160	147	173	9.5%	*	8.8%	10.2%
Hawaii	1,096	1,068	1,124	117	107	127	9.6%	*	8.9%	10.3%
North Dakota	561	546	576	60	55	65	9.6%	*	8.9%	10.3%
Vermont	549	536	562	58	53	63	9.6%	*	8.9%	10.3%
Connecticut	3,047	2,976	3,118	346	323	369	10.2%	*	9.5%	10.9%
Missouri	4,960	4,842	5,078	565	524	606	10.2%	*	9.5%	10.9%
Maine	1,147	1,121	1,173	132	124	140	10.3%	*	9.6%	11.0%
Michigan	8,864	8,703	9,025	1,028	972	1,084	10.4%	*	9.9%	10.9%
Virginia	6,331	6,176	6,486	774	720	828	10.9%	*	10.2%	11.6%
Ohio	9,943	9,767	10,119	1,248	1,184	1,312	11.2%	*	10.7%	11.7%
Tennessee	5,042	4,904	5,180	640	591	689	11.3%	*	10.5%	12.1%
Kansas	2,341	2,283	2,399	301	280	322	11.4%	*	10.6%	12.2%
Indiana	5,322	5,204	5,440	714	670	758	11.8%	*	11.1%	12.5%
Kentucky	3,505	3,413	3,597	492	457	527	12.3%	*	11.5%	13.1%
Maryland	4,673	4,561	4,785	653	610	696	12.3%	*	11.5%	13.1%
South Carolina	3,517	3,427	3,607	493	458	528	12.3%	*	11.5%	13.1%
D.C.	484	469	499	70	65	75	12.7%	*	11.7%	13.7%
Oregon	3,018	2,939	3,097	443	413	473	12.8%	*	12.0%	13.6%
Alabama	3,815	3,715	3,915	573	534	612	13.1%	*	12.3%	13.9%
New Jersey	7,361	7,221	7,501	1,109	1,055	1,163	13.1%	*	12.4%	13.8%
Washington	5,151	5,018	5,284	780	727	833	13.1%	*	12.3%	13.9%
West Virginia	1,539	1,501	1,577	234	219	249	13.2%	*	12.4%	14.0%
Illinois	10,655	10,471	10,839	1,676	1,602	1,750	13.6%	*	13.1%	14.1%
Montana	771	748	794	121	111	131	13.6%	*	12.6%	14.6%
North Carolina	6,932	6,782	7,082	1,167	1,104	1,230	14.4%	*	13.7%	15.1%
Utah	1,927	1,876	1,978	335	314	356	14.8%	*	14.0%	15.6%
New York	15,911	15,696	16,126	2,916	2,822	3,010	15.5%	**	15.0%	16.0%
Colorado	3,723	3,636	3,810	687	649	725	15.6%	**	14.8%	16.4%
Alaska	534	521	547	100	93	107	15.7%	**	14.9%	16.5%
Wyoming	411	399	423	78	73	83	15.9%	**	14.9%	16.9%
Idaho	1,105	1,074	1,136	210	197	223	16.0%	**	15.0%	17.0%
Arkansas	2,229	2,165	2,293	428	400	456	16.1%	**	15.1%	17.1%
Nevada	1,791	1,747	1,835	344	324	364	16.1%	**	15.3%	16.9%
Mississippi	2,341	2,270	2,412	459	428	490	16.4%	**	15.4%	17.4%
Georgia	6,912	6,729	7,095	1,376	1,294	1,458	16.6%	**	15.6%	17.6%
Florida	13,491	13,279	13,703	2,856	2,757	2,955	17.5%	**	17.0%	18.0%
Arizona	4,365	4,238	4,492	950	891	1,009	17.9%	**	16.9%	18.9%
Oklahoma	2,762	2,686	2,838	620	584	656	18.3%	**	17.3%	19.3%
Louisiana	3,544	3,440	3,648	845	794	896	19.3%	**	18.3%	20.3%
California	27,770	27,420	28,120	6,718	6,539	6,897	19.5%	**	19.0%	20.0%
New Mexico	1,431	1,383	1,479	373	348	398	20.7%	**	19.5%	21.9%
Texas	16,105	15,843	16,367	4,960	4,812	5,108	23.5%	**	22.8%	24.2%
U.S.	240,875	n/a	n/a	41,207	40,881	41,533	14.6%		14.4%	14.8%

Source: Bureau of the Census, based on the March 2002 Current Population Survey; ranges computed by the Congressional Research Service.

Notes: * indicates percent uninsured is statistically lower than the national rate; ** indicates percent uninsured is statistically higher than the national rate. Range represents low and high estimates given a 90% confidence interval. n/a indicates not applicable.

Table 2. Number of People Covered and Not Covered by Health Insurance, and Percent Not Covered, By State, 2001

Alphabetical by State (numbers in thousands)

	Number covered			Number not covered			Percent not covered			
	Point estimate	Range Low	Range High	Point estimate	Range Low	Range High	Point estimate	Range Low	Range High	
Alabama	3,815	3,715	3,915	573	534	612	13.1%	*	12.3%	13.9%
Alaska	534	521	547	100	93	107	15.7%	**	14.9%	16.5%
Arizona	4,365	4,238	4,492	950	891	1,009	17.9%	**	16.9%	18.9%
Arkansas	2,229	2,165	2,293	428	400	456	16.1%	**	15.1%	17.1%
California	27,770	27,420	28,120	6,718	6,539	6,897	19.5%	**	19.0%	20.0%
Colorado	3,723	3,636	3,810	687	649	725	15.6%	**	14.8%	16.4%
Connecticut	3,047	2,976	3,118	346	323	369	10.2%	*	9.5%	10.9%
Delaware	719	699	739	73	66	80	9.2%	*	8.5%	9.9%
D.C.	484	469	499	70	65	75	12.7%	*	11.7%	13.7%
Florida	13,491	13,279	13,703	2,856	2,757	2,955	17.5%	**	17.0%	18.0%
Georgia	6,912	6,729	7,095	1,376	1,294	1,458	16.6%	**	15.6%	17.6%
Hawaii	1,096	1,068	1,124	117	107	127	9.6%	*	8.9%	10.3%
Idaho	1,105	1,074	1,136	210	197	223	16.0%	**	15.0%	17.0%
Illinois	10,655	10,471	10,839	1,676	1,602	1,750	13.6%	*	13.1%	14.1%
Indiana	5,322	5,204	5,440	714	670	758	11.8%	*	11.1%	12.5%
Iowa	2,645	2,581	2,709	216	198	234	7.5%	*	6.8%	8.2%
Kansas	2,341	2,283	2,399	301	280	322	11.4%	*	10.6%	12.2%
Kentucky	3,505	3,413	3,597	492	457	527	12.3%	*	11.5%	13.1%
Louisiana	3,544	3,440	3,648	845	794	896	19.3%	**	18.3%	20.3%
Maine	1,147	1,121	1,173	132	124	140	10.3%	*	9.6%	11.0%
Maryland	4,673	4,561	4,785	653	610	696	12.3%	*	11.5%	13.1%
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Michigan	8,864	8,703	9,025	1,028	972	1,084	10.4%	*	9.9%	10.9%
Minnesota	4,530	4,426	4,634	392	361	423	8.0%	*	7.3%	8.7%
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New Hampshire	1,139	1,113	1,165	119	111	127	9.4%	*	8.7%	10.1%
New Jersey	7,361	7,221	7,501	1,109	1,055	1,163	13.1%	*	12.4%	13.8%
New Mexico	1,431	1,383	1,479	373	348	398	20.7%	**	19.5%	21.9%
New York	15,911	15,696	16,126	2,916	2,822	3,010	15.5%	**	15.0%	16.0%
North Carolina	6,932	6,782	7,082	1,167	1,104	1,230	14.4%	*	13.7%	15.1%
North Dakota	561	546	576	60	55	65	9.6%	*	8.9%	10.3%
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Source: Bureau of the Census, based on the March 2002 Current Population Survey; ranges computed by the Congressional Research Service.

Note: * indicates percent uninsured is statistically lower than the national rate; ** indicates percent uninsured is statistically higher than the national rate. Range represents low and high estimates given a 90% confidence interval. n/a indicates not applicable.

Figure 1. Percent Uninsured by State, 2001

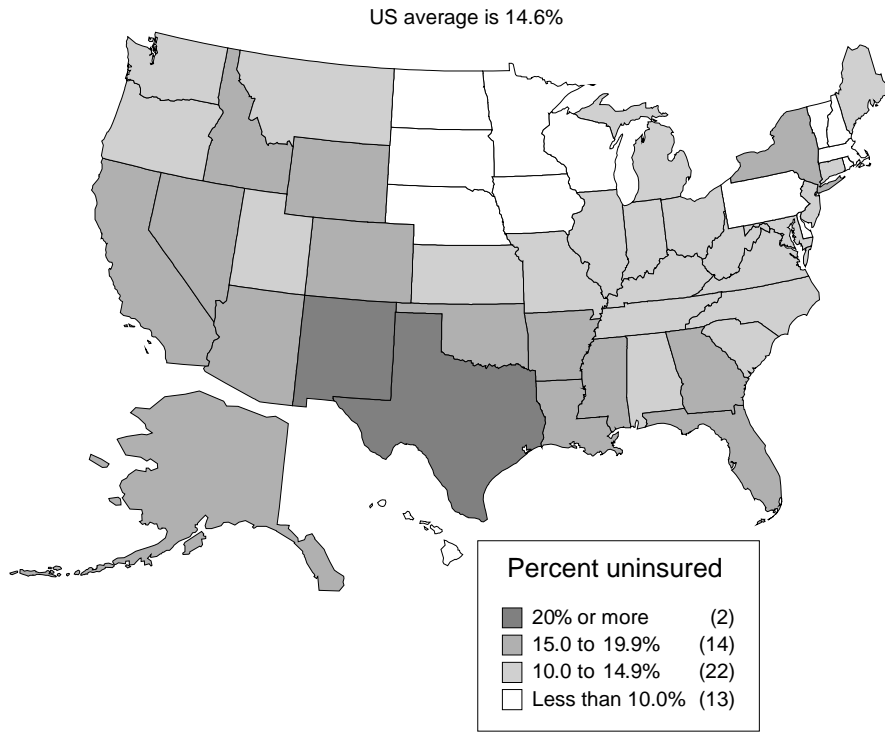


Figure 2. Percent Uninsured by State, 2001

Accounting for Statistical Variation in Estimates

