

Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage: 1994 - Press Release

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CENSUS BUREAU RELEASES INFORMATION ON INCOME, POVERTY, AND HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE IN 1994

EMBARGOED UNTIL: OCT. 5, 1995 (THURSDAY) 10:30 a.m. - The number of Americans living below the poverty level dropped between 1993 and 1994 after four straight years of increases, while median household income after adjusting for inflation did not change significantly. This is according to excerpts from a Commerce Department's Census Bureau report entitled, "Income, Poverty, and Valuation of Noncash Benefits: 1994" (P60-189) that will be published later this year.

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On the health care front, preliminary estimates show that the number of persons without health insurance coverage in 1994 was 39.7 million, or 15.2 percent of the total population. The majority of the nation's population (70.3 percent) was covered by a private insurance plan for some or all of 1994. The remaining insured persons had Government coverage which included Medicaid (12.1 percent or 31.6 million), Medicare (12.9 percent or 33.9 million), and military health care coverage (4.3 percent or 11.2 million).

Other highlights on health insurance coverage follow:

- The majority of persons (70.3 percent) were covered by a private insurance plan for some or all of 1994. The remaining insured persons had Government coverage. This includes Medicaid (12.1 percent), Medicare (12.9 percent), and military health care (4.3 percent).
- Twenty-nine percent of the poor (11.1 million) had no health insurance of any kind during 1994. This percentage was about double the rate for all persons. Poor persons comprised 27.8 percent of uninsured persons.
- Medicaid was the most widespread type of coverage among the poor. About 46.2 percent of poor persons were covered by Medicaid at some time during the year, compared with 12.1 percent of the general population.
- Young adults aged 18 to 24 were more likely than other

age groups to lack coverage during all of 1994 (26.7 percent). The elderly were at the other extreme (0.9 percent).

- Part-time workers (less than 35 hours per week) had the highest noncoverage rate at 19.5 percent, while persons who did not work at all had the lowest uninsured rate, 13.4 percent.
- Of the 139.1 million workers, 53.3 percent had employer-provided health insurance policies in their own name.
- Percentages of persons without health insurance coverage ranged from 8.4 percent in North Dakota to 24.2 percent in Texas.

The information presented above is from the March 1995 Current Population Survey. As in all surveys, the data are subject to sampling variability and other sources of error.

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Editor's Note: Media representatives may obtain reproduced excerpts from the forthcoming report on income, poverty, and valuation of noncash benefits from the Census Bureau's Public Information Office on 301-763-3030; fax: 301-763-3670; or e-mail: pio@census.gov. Non-media requests should go to the bureau's statistical information staff on 301-763-3242 notice will be issued when printed copies of the report are available.