



Uninsured Children in Connecticut: 2006

February 2008

Statewide estimates

The latest data from the US Census Bureau indicate that an estimated 49,000 Connecticut children under 18 were *uninsured for the entire year* in 2006.¹ This number represents 6.0% of all Connecticut children.

While it might appear that the number and percentage of uninsured children dropped from the previous year, a comparison of two-year averages, as recommended by the US Census Bureau, show the rate is unchanged.

An estimated 29,000 Connecticut children under 19 who lived in families with income at or below 200% of the federal poverty level (FPL) were uninsured.² *Virtually all these children are income-eligible for coverage in the HUSKY Program.*

Local estimates

Most sources of Connecticut-specific data on the uninsured do not provide local estimates of the number or proportion of uninsured children.³ County-level health insurance estimates for the year 2000 recently became available, but are based on methods that the Census Bureau considers experimental.⁴

The number of uninsured children in a particular community is likely to be higher than the statewide estimate if local population and socioeconomic conditions are present that are known to contribute to being uninsured. For example, the uninsured rate is likely to be higher in a town with a relatively large population of Hispanic residents or in a town whose residents are mainly seasonal employees or employees of small businesses that do not typically offer health insurance.

Comparison with other Connecticut data

The Connecticut Office for Health Care Access (OHCA) recently reported that about 24,700 children

under 19 were *uninsured at the time their families were surveyed* in 2006.⁵ According to that survey, 50,600 children were uninsured for some period of time during the previous 12 months. Different methods and measurements contribute to differences between the Census and OHCA estimates.^{6, 7}

Comparison with US rates

Nationwide, an estimated 8.7 million children under 18 were *uninsured for the entire year* in 2006.⁸ The number and proportion of US children who were uninsured in 2006 (11.7%) did not change statistically over the previous year, from 8.0 million children (10.9%).

United States children were more likely to be uninsured if they were:⁹

- *12 to 17 years old* (12.6%), as compared with children under 6 (11.3%) and children 6 to 11 (11.1%);
- *Hispanic* (22.1%), as compared with White non-Hispanic (7.3%) and Black non-Hispanic children (14.1%);
- *Living in families in poverty*¹⁰ (19.3%), as compared with all children (11.7%).

The uninsured rates for children in New England states, including Connecticut, were lower in 2005-06 than the rate for all US children.¹¹

¹ DeNavas-Walt C, Proctor, BD, Smith, J. Income, poverty, and health insurance coverage in the United States: 2006. Washington, DC: US Census Bureau, August 2007. www.census.gov See Table HI05. Current Population Survey (CPS) data do not provide any information about the number or percentage of persons who were underinsured or uninsured for part of the year, nor do CPS data give any longitudinal picture of health insurance coverage. Other limitations: 1) small sample size in a small state like Connecticut produces relatively large confidence intervals around the estimate, especially for subpopulations like children; 2) respondents may be confused

about the time period (full 12 months of the calendar year v. part year v. point-in-time); 3) respondents may be confused about type of coverage For example, Medicaid v. Title XIX v. HUSKY A v. health plan name.; 4) survey methods tend to produce an underestimate of Medicaid participation; 5) methods can change from year to year.

² US Census Bureau. Numbers and percents of children under 19 years of age, at or below 200% of poverty, by state: Three year averages for 2004, 2005, 2006.

<http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/hlthins/liuc06.html>. In 2006, 200% of the federal poverty level was \$34,340 in annual income for a family of 3 and \$41,300 for a family of 4.

³ Other sources of data on the uninsured: 2004 survey by the Office for Health Care Access, annual Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System data, Connecticut data from 2001 National Survey of Children with Special Health Care Needs.

⁴ US Census Bureau. Small area health insurance estimates by state, 2000. www.census.gov.

⁵ Connecticut Office of Health Care Access. Health insurance coverage in Connecticut: Executive Summary of the 2006 Household Survey.

www.ct.gov/ohca/lib/ohca/common_elements/household06_summary_single_pages_for_pdf.pdf

⁶ Vogel CA. Summary briefing: Office of Health Care Access state planning grant survey results (presentation to Healthy Kids CT meeting). Hartford, CT: OHCA, January 18, 2006.

⁷ Call, Kathleen, Michael Davern, and Lynn Blewett. "Estimates of Health Insurance Coverage: Comparing State Surveys with the Current Population Survey." *Health Affairs* 26.1 (2007): 269-278.

⁸ DeNavas-Walt C, Proctor, BD, Smith, J. Income, poverty, and health insurance coverage in the United States: 2006.

Washington, DC: US Census Bureau, August 2007.

www.census.gov

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ \$17,170 is the equivalent to a 3 person family living below 100% of the federal poverty level in 2006.

¹¹ Uninsured children in New England states, 2005-06: Maine 7%, New Hampshire 7%, Vermont 7%, Massachusetts 6%, Rhode Island 6% and Connecticut 7%. Source:

www.statehealthfacts.org