

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
September 10, 2009**

33 Whitney Avenue  
New Haven, CT 06510  
Voice: 203-498-4240  
Fax: 203-498-4242  
[www.ctkidslink.org](http://www.ctkidslink.org)

Contacts: Sharon Langer, J.D., Senior Policy Fellow  
(860) 548-1661  
Mary Alice Lee, Ph.D., Senior Policy Fellow (technical questions)  
(203) 498-4240

## **Census data show decline in employer-sponsored health insurance coverage in Connecticut over decade**

### ***CT Voices calls for support of HUSKY health insurance program and enabling workers to keep insurance when they lose their jobs***

Data released today by the U.S. Census Bureau show that there has been a decline over this decade in the number of Connecticut residents with employer-sponsored health insurance. At the same time, there has been no significant change in the number of uninsured Connecticut residents in recent years. Connecticut Voices for Children, a research-based policy think tank, attributed the relative stability in the uninsured rate in part to the success of the state's HUSKY health insurance program in enrolling uninsured children and families. The group also pointed out that increased unemployment in Connecticut in 2009 means that the state's uninsured rate will likely increase.

“As the U.S. Congress considers ways to make health insurance more accessible and affordable, these findings highlight the importance of supporting and expanding public health insurance programs that work, like HUSKY,” said Sharon Langer, Senior Policy Fellow at Connecticut Voices for Children. “As fewer Connecticut residents have access to employer-sponsored coverage, Congress should support policies that help families maintain their health insurance when they lose or change their jobs.”

Based on a comparison of two-year average rates, there was a statistically significant decline in the percentage of people under age 65 in Connecticut who had employer-sponsored health coverage over this decade, dropping from 77.1% in 2000-2001 to 71.0% in 2007-2008. There was a similar significant decrease in children who were covered by employer-sponsored insurance – from 77.3% in 2000-2001 to 70.3% in 2007-2008. There was no statistically significant change between the most recent two-year period (2007-2008) and the previous period (2005-2006). (Because of small sample survey sizes at the state level, two-year estimates should be used to evaluate trends over time in Connecticut.)

Census data from the Current Population Survey reveal that an estimated 10.0% (343,000) of all Connecticut residents in 2008 were without health insurance for the entire year. Among Connecticut children under age 18, 5.4% (44,000) lacked insurance for the entire year. There was no statistically significant change in the percentage of Connecticut residents who were

uninsured in Connecticut over recent years. (No city- or county-level estimates for health insurance coverage, poverty, or income are available from the CPS.)

Connecticut Voices for Children suggested that Connecticut had probably been able to hold down the number of uninsured residents in part because of the state's efforts to enroll more families in the HUSKY health insurance program. In July 2007, income eligibility was increased for parents and pregnant women in the program. Also in 2008, the state provided funding for community-based HUSKY outreach. As a result, enrollment of children, parents, and pregnant women in HUSKY increased in 2008 by about 15,000. However, Connecticut Voices warned that this progress in enrollment could suffer because the recently approved state budget cuts nearly all funding for HUSKY outreach, and eliminates HUSKY and Medicaid coverage for about 3,500 adult legal immigrants.

Connecticut Voices for Children pointed out that these estimates from 2008 provided a snapshot of health insurance coverage early in the state's recession, which officially began in March 2008. The group also suggested that a jump in Connecticut unemployment rates early in 2009 will likely mean that the numbers of uninsured will increase in the state this year.

Nationally, the percentage of all Americans who are uninsured has not changed significantly since 2007. In 2008, 15.4% of Americans were uninsured (46.3 million), a rate that was not statistically different from the 2007 rate (15.3%). Among children in the U.S., 9.9% (7.3 million) were uninsured, significantly lower than the 2007 rate (11.0%). Nationally, the uninsured rate for children and number of uninsured children are the lowest since 1987, the first year that comparable health insurance data were collected. In addition, the percentage of Americans under age 65 with employer-sponsored health insurance coverage decreased from 62.9% in 2007 to 61.9% in 2008 (163.1 million).

"While it is good news that the number of uninsured in Connecticut has not increased, it is unacceptable that 343,000 individuals lack health insurance and therefore do not have access to affordable health care," said Jim Horan, Executive Director at the Connecticut Association for Human Services. "Reform of our health care system must take place so all Connecticut residents can get the health care they need."

"Health care is an essential component of economic security. As more people are unemployed and fewer employers offer affordable health insurance, we need to have strong public programs which provide a safety net for all families," commented Jane McNichol, Executive Director of the Legal Assistance Resource Center of Connecticut.

National and state-level data on health insurance coverage are available on the U.S. Census Web site at [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov). Health insurance data are drawn from the Current Population Survey (CPS). **See the attached fact sheet for detailed survey results and background on its measures.** This news release and fact sheet are also available on the CT Voices Web site at [www.ctkidslink.org](http://www.ctkidslink.org).

Connecticut Voices for Children is a research-based policy think tank that works to advance strategic public investment and wise public policies to benefit our state's children, youth and families.

**-END-**