SHADAC Data Center Enhancements and Revisions

October 2010

Introduction

Several enhancements and revisions have been made to SHADAC's Data Center, a web-based table generator tool allowing users to customize tables and graphs of health insurance coverage estimates within a pre-defined set of parameters. Estimates are available from the Current Population Survey (CPS), the SHADAC-Enhanced CPS[1], and the American Community Survey (ACS). Enhancements have been made to allow the calculation of insurance coverage by poverty and age categories related to health reform. Revisions have also been made to improve consistency between the calculation of variables in the CPS and the ACS and to incorporate additional fixes with this release.

New Poverty and Age Categories

The table options and filters have been updated to reflect the enactment of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Data Center users can now easily access health insurance coverage estimates by ACA policy-relevant groups, including new poverty and young adult age categories.

Poverty Categories
The CPS data files from the U.S. Census Bureau provide pre-defined categories for the poverty variables. SHADAC has created a continuous poverty variable from the data, which allows the creation of customized poverty categories in the CPS and SHADAC-Enhanced CPS data. The Census Bureau provides a continuous poverty variable for the ACS data.

The poverty level table now provides health insurance coverage estimates for the following Federal Poverty Level (FPL) categories: 0 to 138, 139 to 199, 200 to 399, and 400 percent plus.   New poverty status filters have also been added for <139 percent FPL and 139 percent plus FPL. The filters allow data users to cross poverty status by all of the table options. Users can look at health insurance coverage by poverty status by: race and ethnicity, age, family income, sex, marital status, work status, education, health status (CPS only), and citizenship (ACS only).

Why 138 percent FPL?
Under the ACA, eligibility for Medicaid will be based on modified adjusted gross income (MAGI), as defined in the Internal Revenue Code, §36B(d)(2).   Although the language of the ACA specifies that low-income people are Medicaid-eligible with MAGI at or below 133 percent of the FPL, the ACA also

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[1] The SHADAC-Enhanced CPS health insurance coverage estimates are CPS data reweighted and adjusted to account for historical changes in the survey's methodology. SHADAC recommends using the enhanced CPS data for trend analysis. For more information see "SHADAC-Enhanced CPS Health Insurance Coverage Estimates: A Summary of Historical Adjustments."

includes a five percentage point disregard of income in determining eligibility. With this five percentage point disregard, the Medicaid eligibility threshold is effectively 138 percent of the FPL.

Age Categories
The categories in the age table were changed to include 25 year olds in the young adult group. The young adult age categories are now 18 to 25 and 19 to 25.   Under ACA adults are allowed to stay on their parent's health care plan through age 25.

Two additional improvements were also made to the age table. 1) The 65 to 74 year old age group and 75 plus age group were collapsed into a 65 plus age group, as this is more policy relevant. 2) A new age (summary) table of rolled-up categories was added. The new age table includes 0 to 17, 0 to 18, 18 to 64, 19 to 64, 0 to 64 and 65 plus.

Other Revisions

Revisions have also been made to improve consistency between the calculation of variables in the CPS and the ACS and to incorporate additional fixes with this release.

- Marital status tables for CPS and SHADAC-Enhanced CPS were corrected. Separated individuals are now included in the "married" category instead of "not married." Marital status in the ACS was already calculated this way, with separated individuals tabulated as married.
- In the family income table for CPS and SHADAC-Enhanced CPS the lowest category was changed to include those with negative incomes. Negative income was already included in the lowest category of family income for ACS.
- A minor correction was made in the creation of family variables for all three data sets. All households without an individual 18 or older are now included in the calculation of the family variables. A small number of households without an individual 18 or older were incorrectly dropped from the tabulation of family variables.
- A correction was made to the calculation of public coverage for children in the SHADAC-Enhanced CPS for 1987 to 1992.   A small number of children were assigned to have Medicaid coverage for these years.
- Data suppression was implemented for the CPS and SHADAC-Enhanced CPS 2-year and 3-year average tables, following the same rules as for single year tables.   Data are suppressed if the total unweighted number of observations is less than 50.
- All suppressed or missing data are now indicated with "--" instead of "0". As mentioned, data are suppressed if the total unweighted number of observations is less than 50. Data are missing for health status, employer coverage, and individual coverage for CPS and SHADAC-Enhanced CPS for 1987 to 1994 as these data are not available. Missing data may also be indicated based on filter selection. For example, if the <200 percent poverty status filter is selected the poverty level table will have missing data for the 200 to 399 percent FPL and the 400 percent plus FPL categories.