



Concern Over the Census Bureau's September's Release of the 2001 Current Population Survey's Estimate of the Number of Children Within Each State

In late September 2001, the Census Bureau released the 2001 March Demographic Supplement or Current Population Survey (CPS) data to the public. The September 2001 CPS estimates including an error that affected the total number of children within each state. Some states saw a significant increase in their estimate, while most state estimates were significantly smaller.

Along with the observed change in the number of children living in each state, the number of children in poverty and the number of uninsured children in poverty is also greatly affected. These numbers use the total number of children living within a state as their base. Further complicating the situation is that there was real decline in poverty national wide from 1999-2000 (Census Bureau 2001 Poverty Report), as well as the addition of a verification question to the 2000 CPS.¹ The verification question reduced the estimates of the number of uninsured children nationwide by approximately 8.8%.

SHADAC has calculated the percent change between the 2000 estimates and the 1997-1999 three-year averages for the total number of children living within a state, the total number of children living below 200% of poverty living within a state, and the total number of children living below 200% of poverty who do not have health insurance. The percent change estimates are in the table: *Percent Change From 1997-1999 CPS Three-Year Average Estimate to the 2000 Calendar Year Estimate*.

The Census Bureau has released a set of updated survey weights that correct this problem on their web site:

<http://www.bls.census.gov/cps/ads/2001/susenote.htm>

The Census Bureau has not updated their health insurance tables and report yet. This update should occur shortly. SHADAC will update this page as soon as the new reports are released. Please contact Michael Davern (612-625-4835) or <daver004@umn.edu> of SHADAC with further questions.

¹ In 2000, the Current Population Survey (CPS) March Supplement added an experimental health insurance "verification" question. Survey respondents who did not report any type of health insurance coverage were asked an additional question about whether or not they were, in fact, uninsured. The Census Bureau found that approximately 92 percent of those who answered "no" to all types of insurance coverage verified that they were, in fact, uninsured. However, about 8 percent (about 3.3 million people) of those who initially answered "no" later said that they did have insurance. <http://www.shadac.org/event/CPScc8-0-01/QandA.pdf>