



# U.S. Census Bureau: American Community Survey (ACS) and Current Population Survey (CPS)

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# ACS and CPS Overview

	ACS	CPS
<b>Survey Methods</b>		
Primary focus of survey	General household survey	Labor force participation and unemployment
Data collection period	Continuous	February to April
Mode of data collection	Mail, phone and in-person	Phone and in-person
Annual Number of Housing Units Surveyed	About 2 million	About 80,000
Population surveyed	U.S. population (including group quarters)	Civilian non-institutionalized population
<b>Geography Available</b>		
Nation and States	Yes	Yes
Sub-state	Yes	No
<b>Health Insurance Measurement</b>		
Coverage question	Single question, includes different coverage types as response categories	Series of questions about coverage types
Uninsurance measure	Point in time	All of prior calendar year

# American Community Survey (ACS)

# ACS: New Question

- The Census Bureau is proposing the addition of an exchange or premium subsidy question in 2014
- This question would follow the current health insurance coverage question

# ACS: Current Coverage Question

- Asks about coverage at the time of survey
- Mark yes or no to 7 categories
- Option of writing-in a response

Is this person **CURRENTLY** covered by any of the following types of health insurance or health coverage plans? Mark "Yes" or "No" for EACH type of coverage in items a – h.

	Yes	No
a. Insurance through a current or former employer or union (of this person or another family member)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Insurance purchased directly from an insurance company (by this person or another family member)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Medicare, for people 65 and older, or people with certain disabilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Medicaid, Medical Assistance, or any kind of government-assistance plan for those with low incomes or a disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. TRICARE or other military health care	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. VA (including those who have ever used or enrolled for VA health care)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Indian Health Service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Any other type of health insurance or health coverage plan – <i>Specify</i> ↘	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

# Current Population Survey (CPS)

# CPS: New Questions and Redesign

- New questions to measure exchange participation
- New questions on employer offered health insurance coverage
- Alternative health insurance coverage questions
  - Improve all year coverage measure
  - Add point-in-time coverage measure
- Federal Registrar Doc. 2012–16389

# CPS: New Questions and Redesign

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- New questions on employer offered health insurance coverage
- **Alternative health insurance coverage questions**
  - Improve all year coverage measure
  - Add point-in-time coverage measure
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# Problematic CPS Questionnaire Features

1. Calendar year reference period
2. Questionnaire structure = “laundry list”
3. Household-level design

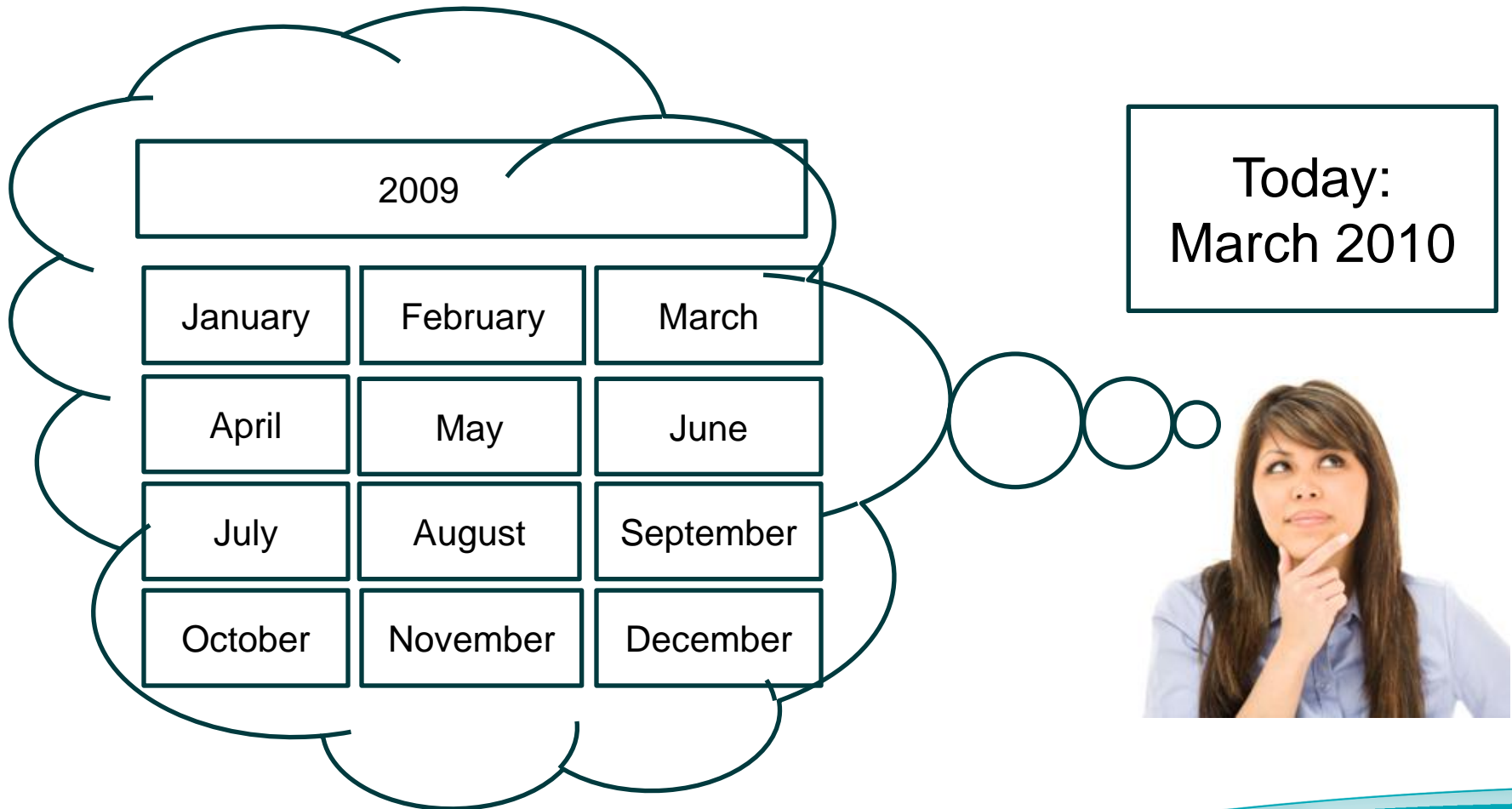
Source: Joanne Pascale (AAPOR, 2012)

# Problematic CPS Questionnaire Features

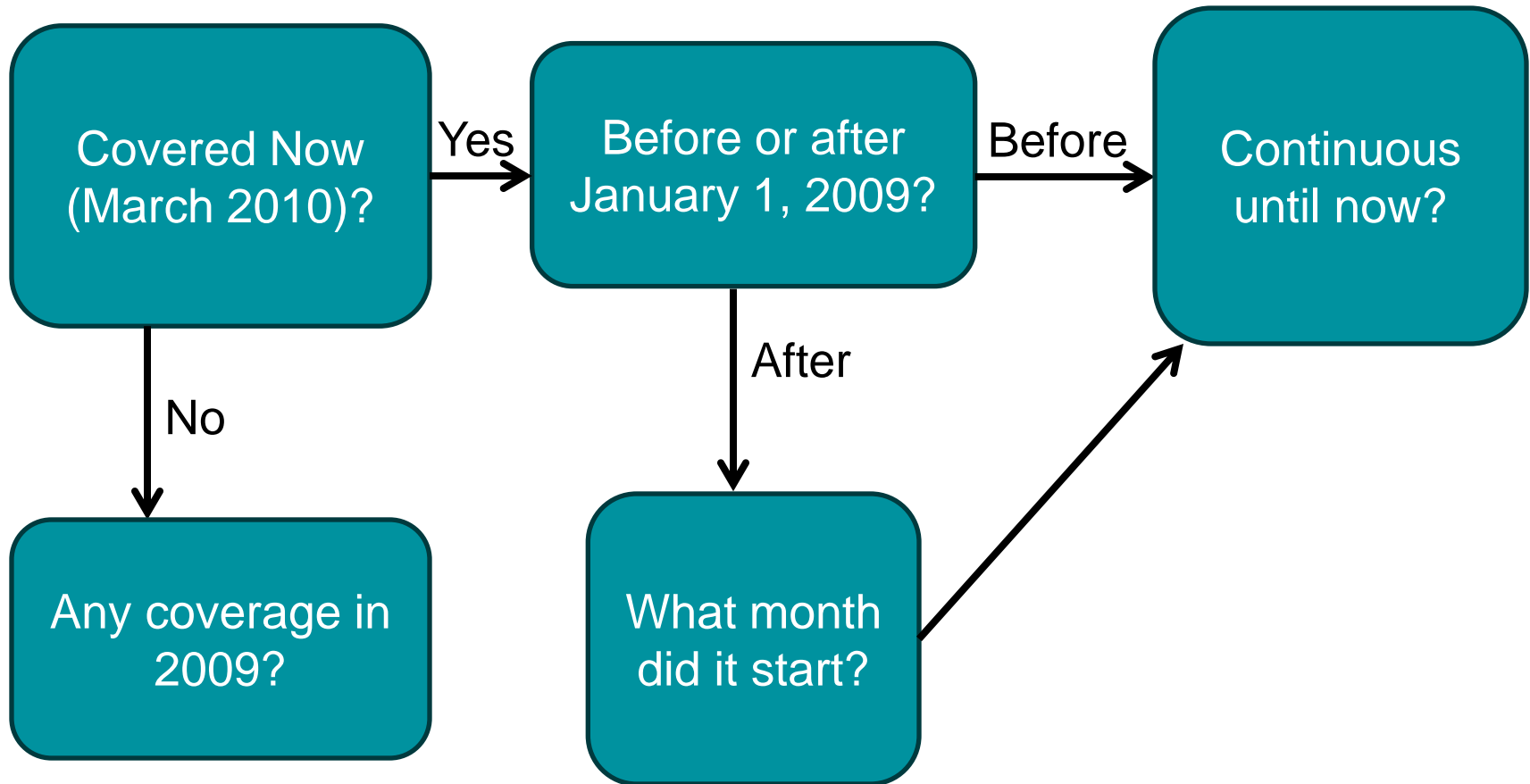
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# CPS: Calendar year look-back



# Alternative: Retrospective Health Insurance Questions

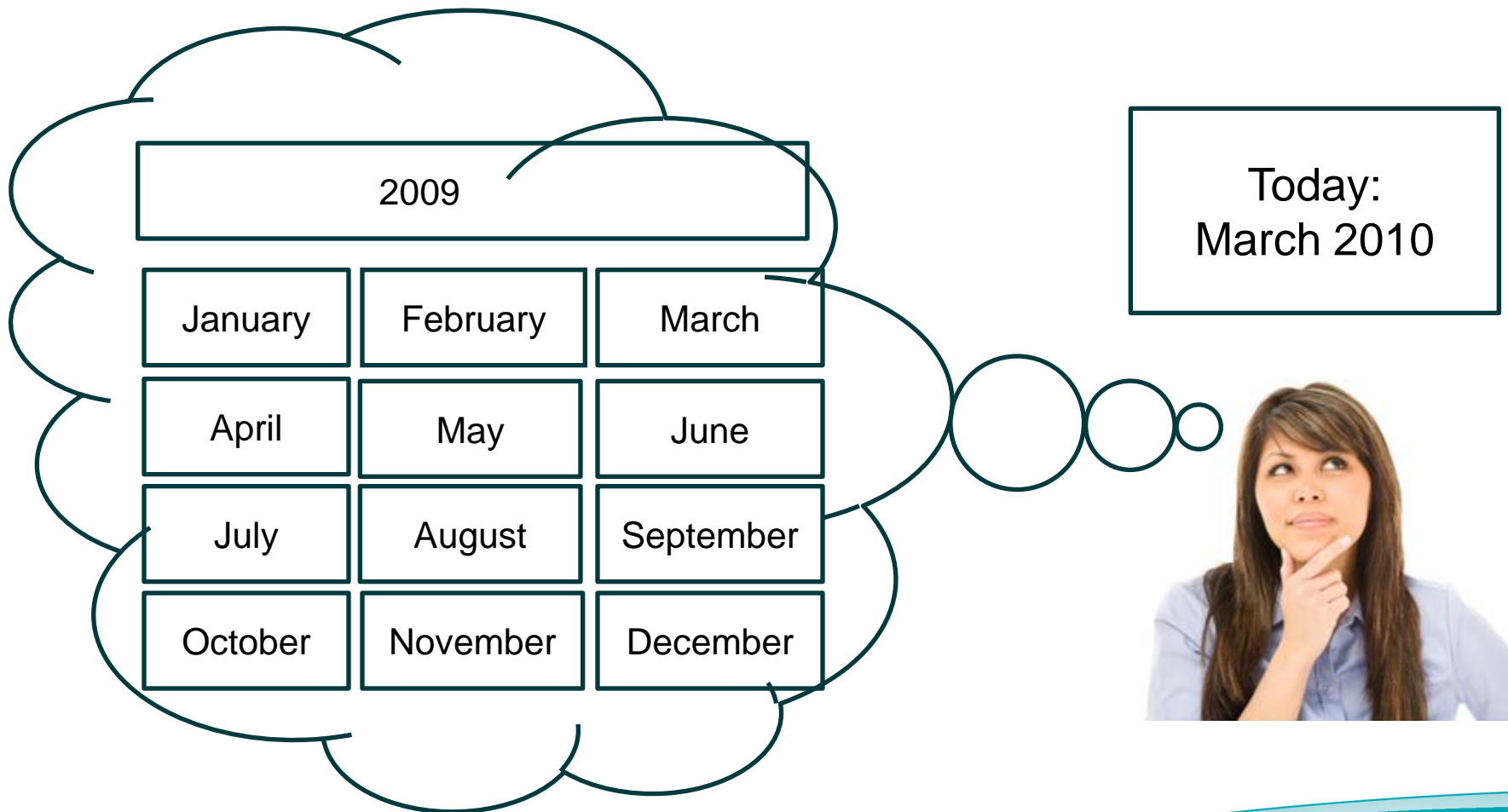


# Coverage Scenario



- Had employer-based coverage, but lost job and unable to afford COBRA
- After being uninsured for a few months obtained Medicaid
- Got a new job and is currently covered by job

# Coverage Scenario: Production CPS



# Coverage Scenario: Production CPS

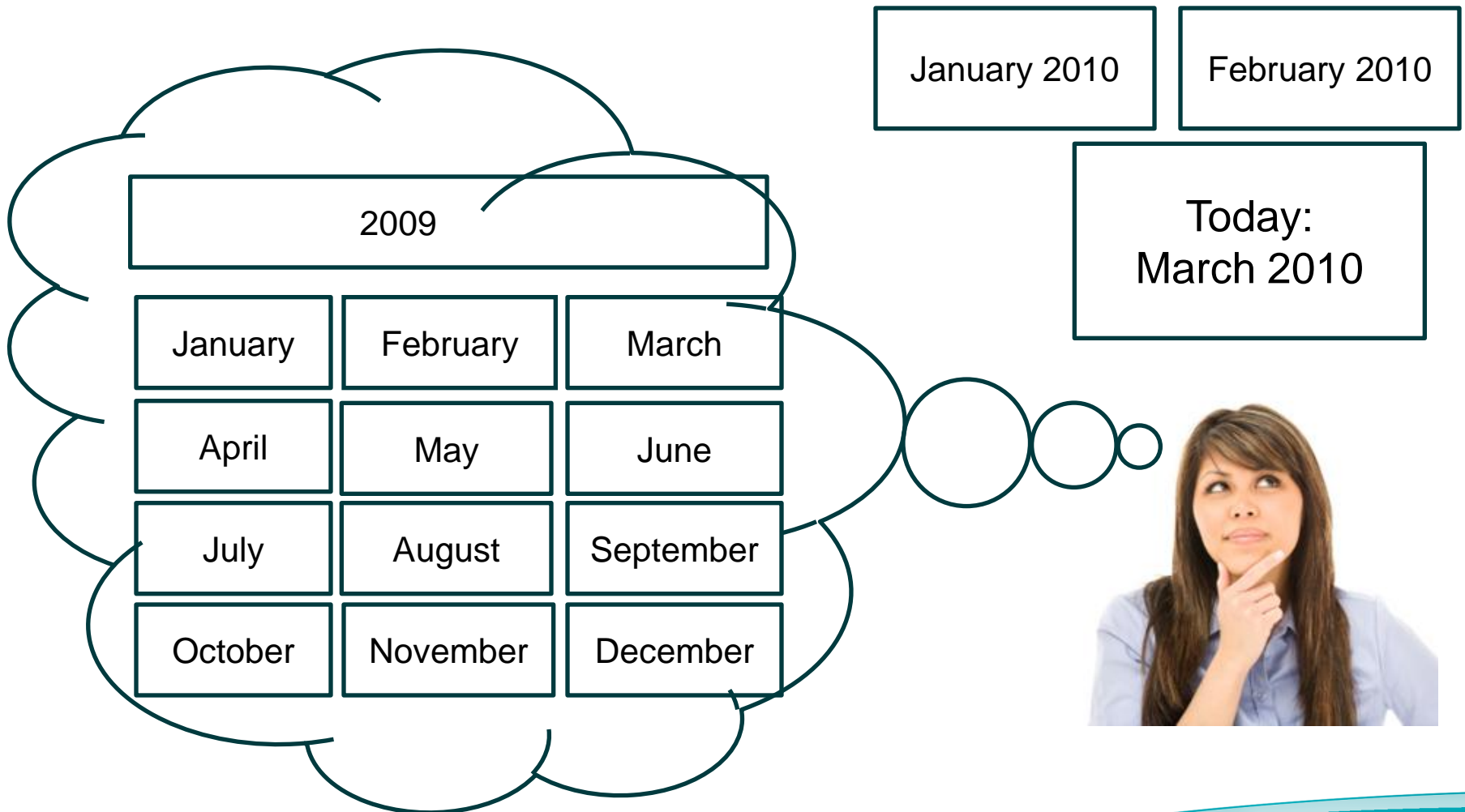
2009

Employer-based  
and  
Medicaid

Today:  
March 2010

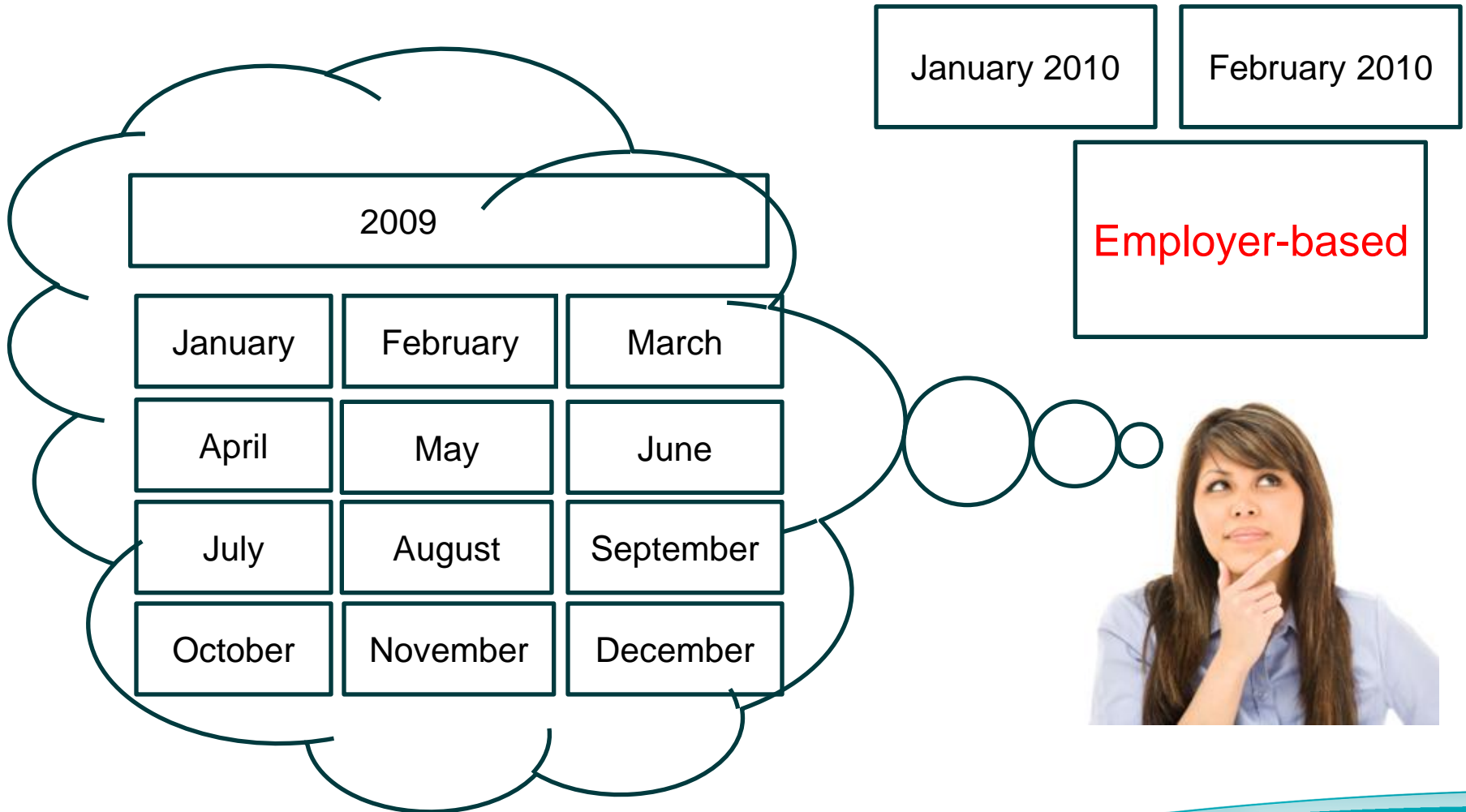


# Coverage Scenario: Alternative CPS

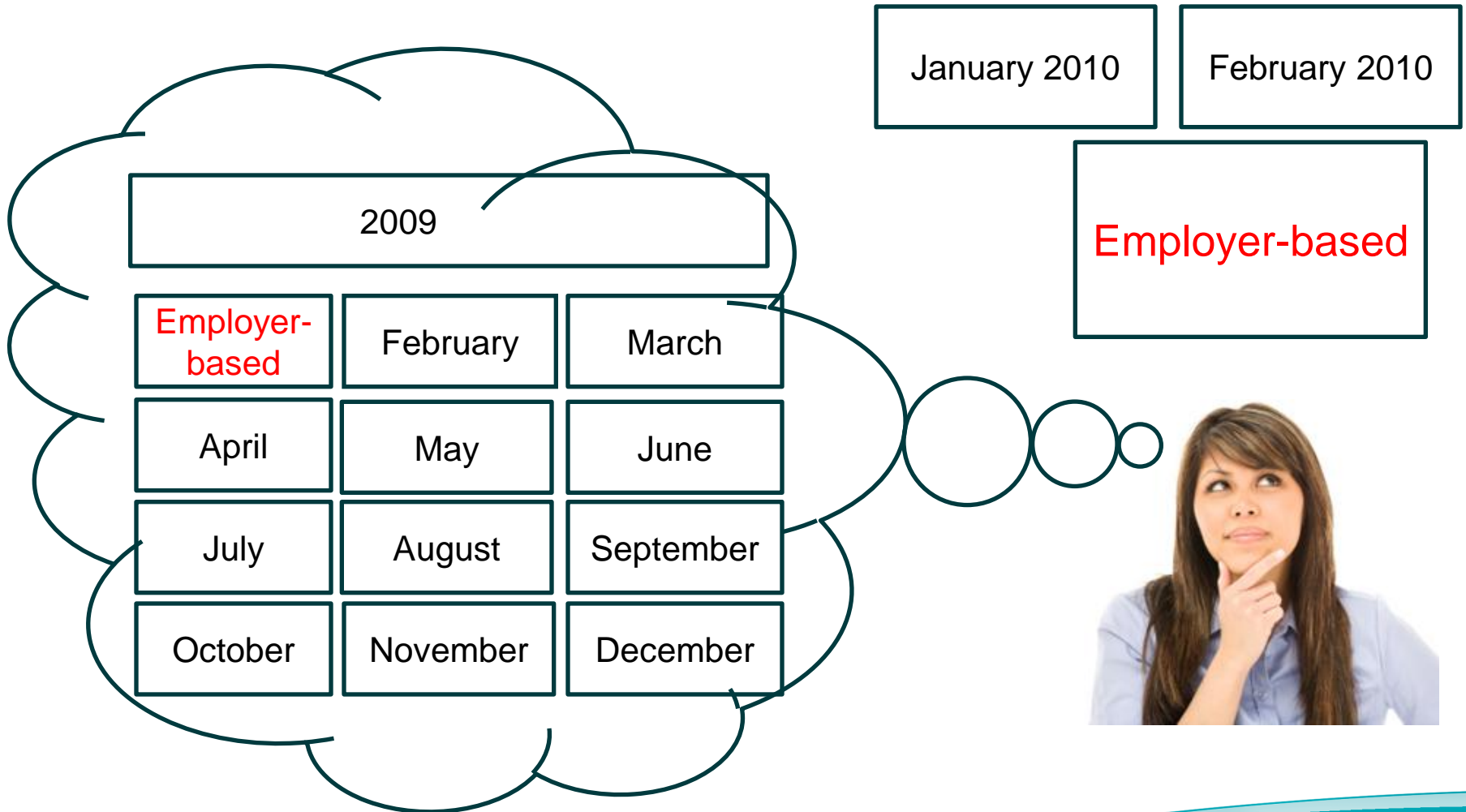




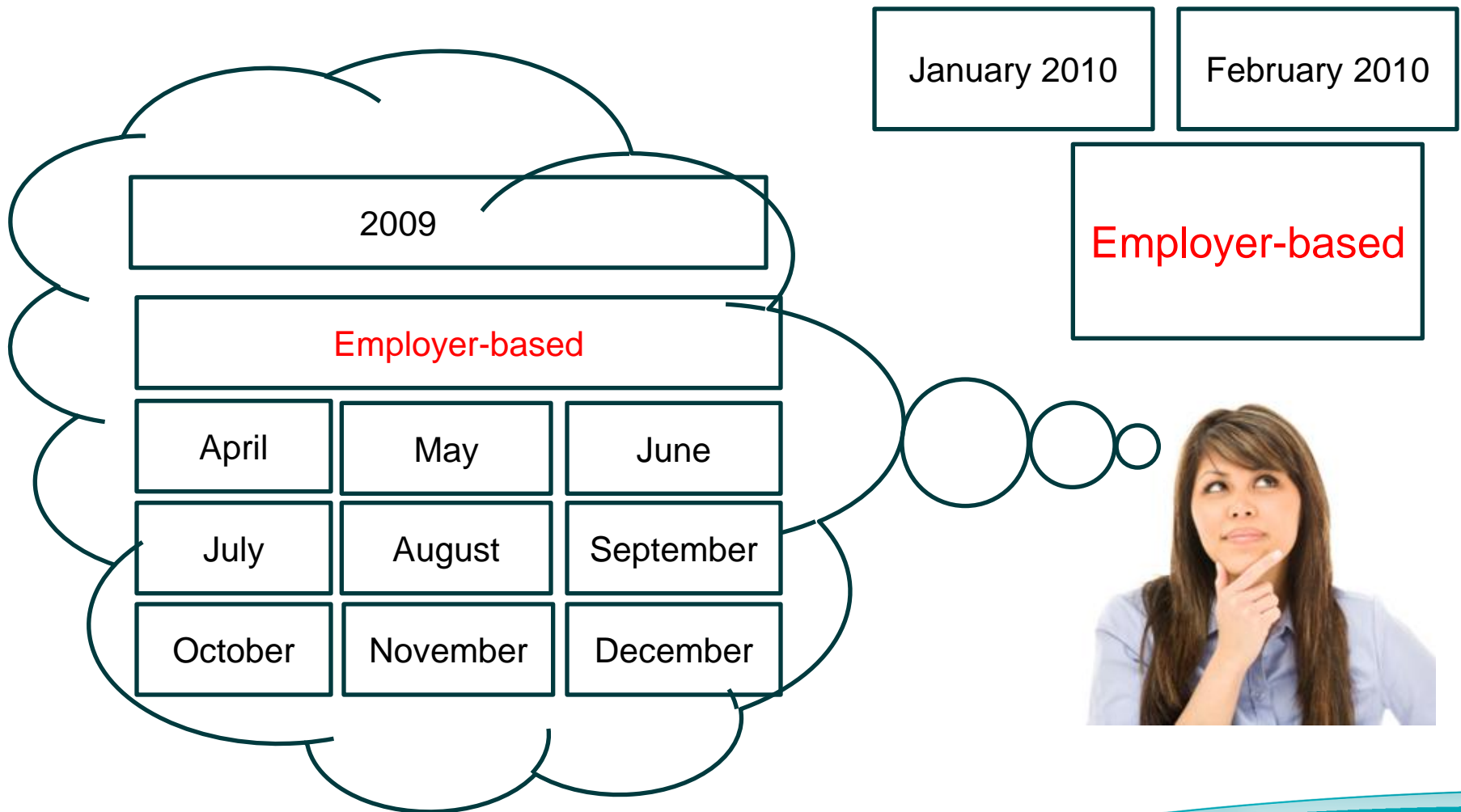
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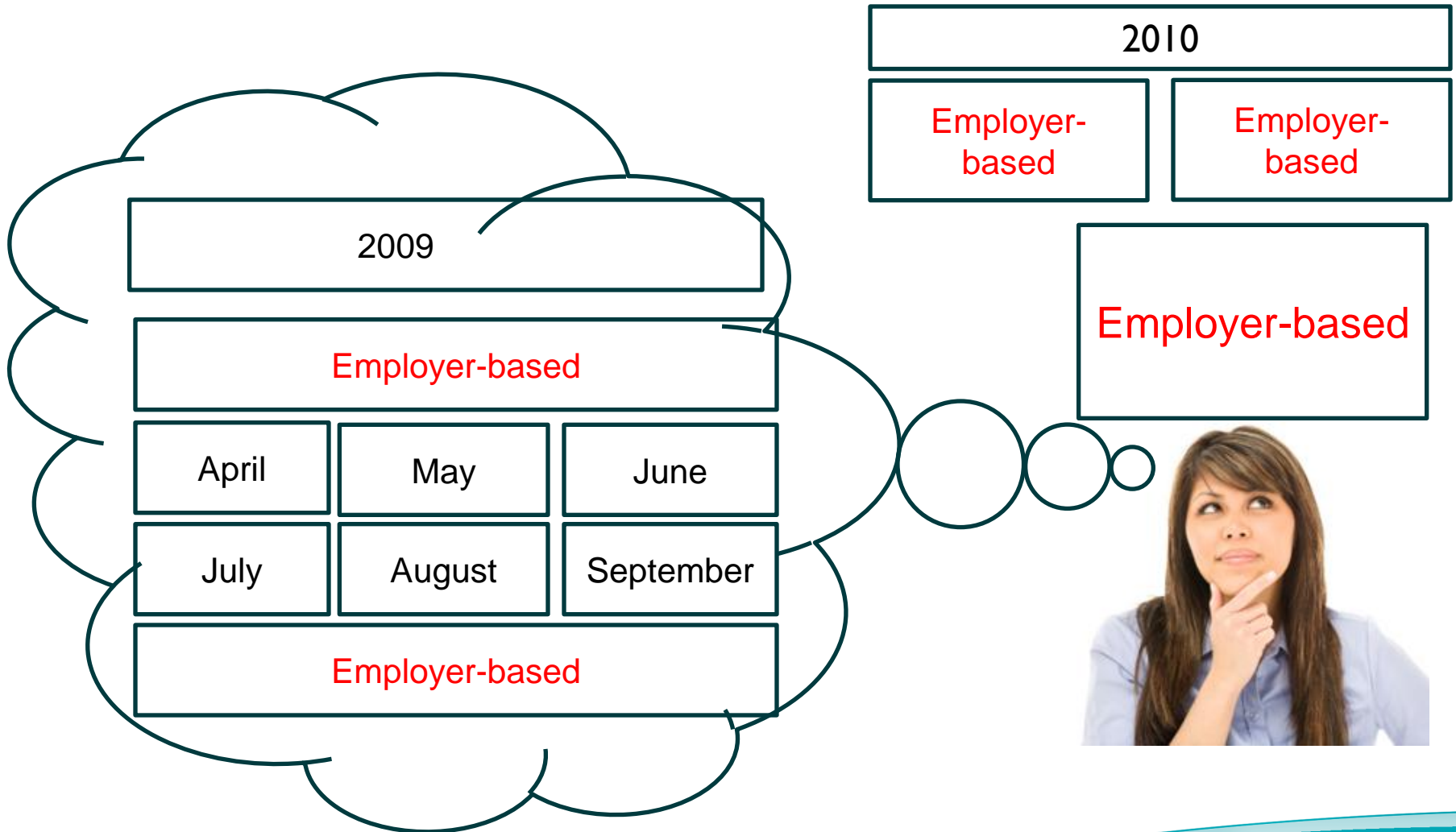
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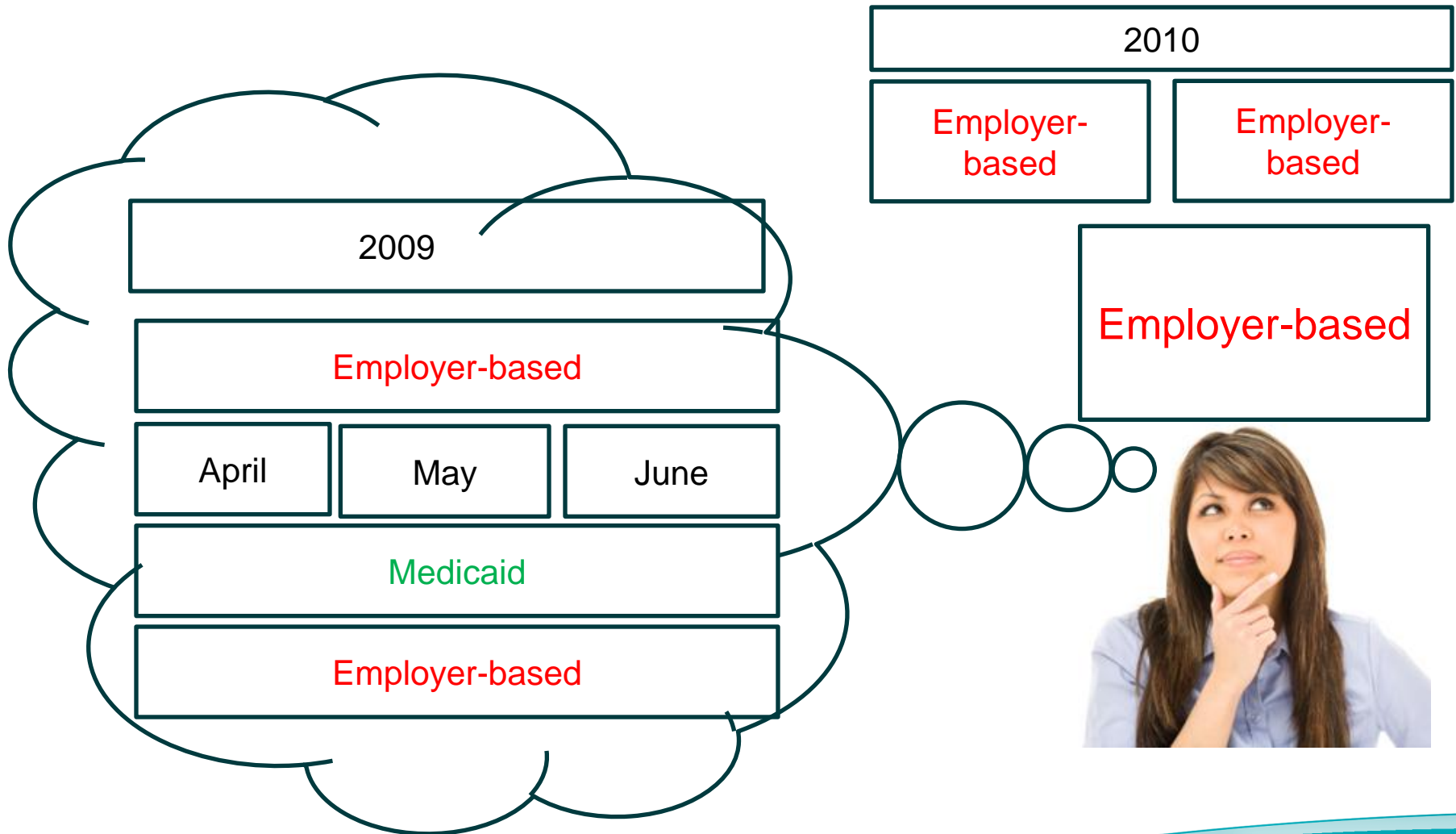
# Coverage Scenario: Alternative CPS



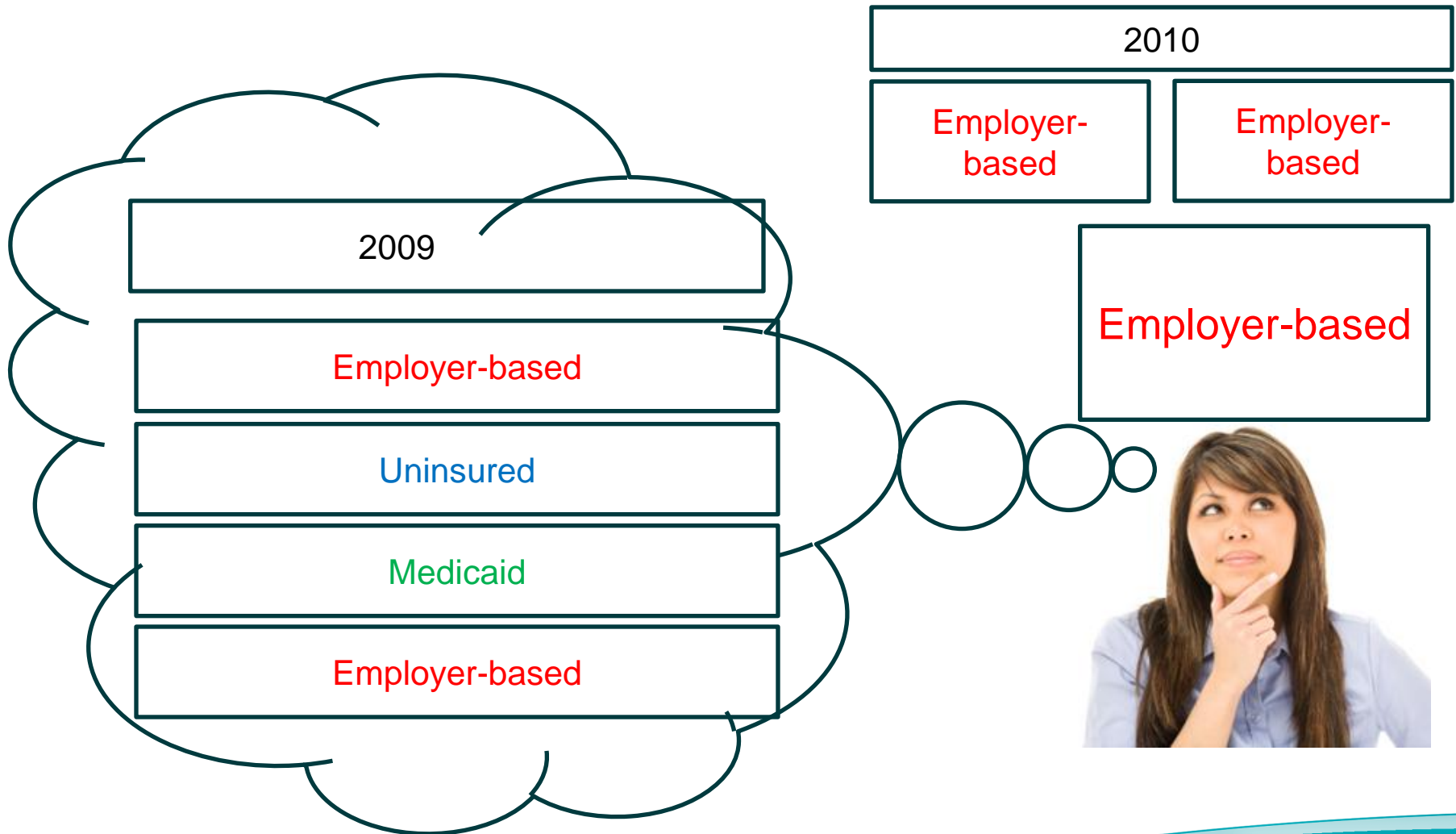
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# Coverage Scenario: Alternative CPS



# Problematic CPS Questionnaire Features

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Source: Joanne Pascale (AAPOR, 2012)

# CPS: Questionnaire Structure

- Each plan type is asked about sequentially
  - Plan through current/former employer or union
  - Plan purchased directly from insurance company
  - Plan of someone outside the HH
  - Medicare
  - Medicaid/state-specific plan name
  - CHIP/state-specific plan name
  - TRICARE, CHAMPVA, VA, military health care
  - Other [such as state-specific plan name]



# Alternative: Questionnaire Structure

- Simplified questions
- Starts with yes/no question on coverage
- Drills down as needed to current CPS level of detail

# Alternative: Questionnaire Structure

Any coverage now?  
If 65+, Medicare now?

No

Yes

Medicaid, Medical Assistance,  
CHIP?  
Medicare?  
State specific plan name?  
Verification of uninsured

General source: job,  
government or other?

# Alternative: Questionnaire Structure

General source: job, government or other?

## **Job:**

Military related?  
...TRICARE, VA, Etc.

## **Government:**

Job with government?  
Government type?  
Medicare  
Medicaid, Medical  
Assistance, CHIP  
Military or VA  
Other

## **Other:**

Parent/spouse?  
Direct purchase?  
Other?

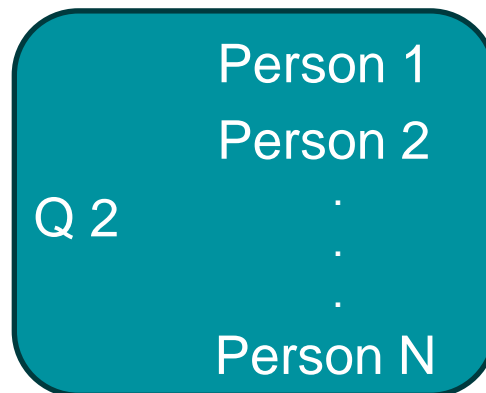
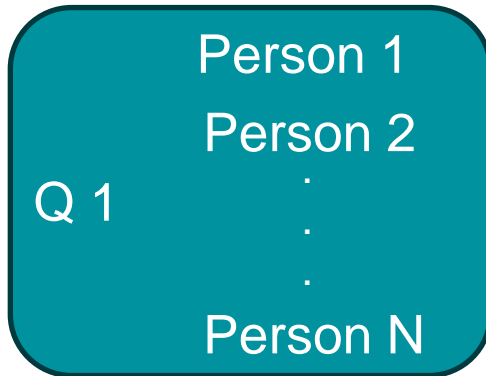
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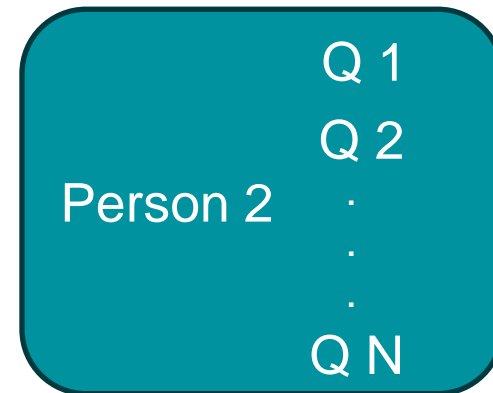
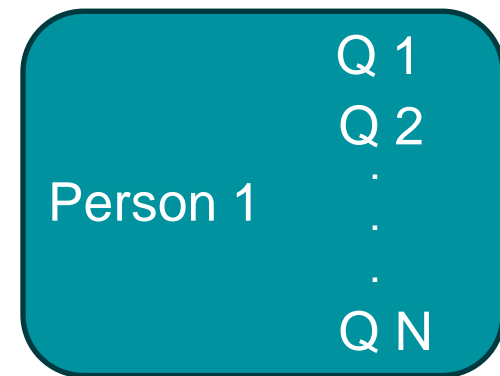
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# Household-level vs. Person-level

## Household-level



## Person-level



# Summary: Proposed Changes

- American Community Survey (ACS)
  - Add question on exchange or premium subsidy
- Current Population Survey (CPS)
  - Add question on exchange or premium subsidy
  - Add question on employer offered coverage
  - Redesign health insurance coverage questions
    - Improve all year coverage measure
    - Add point-in-time coverage measure

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