

Left Behind: Post Reform Coverage Gaps for Undocumented Immigrants

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Professor and Director

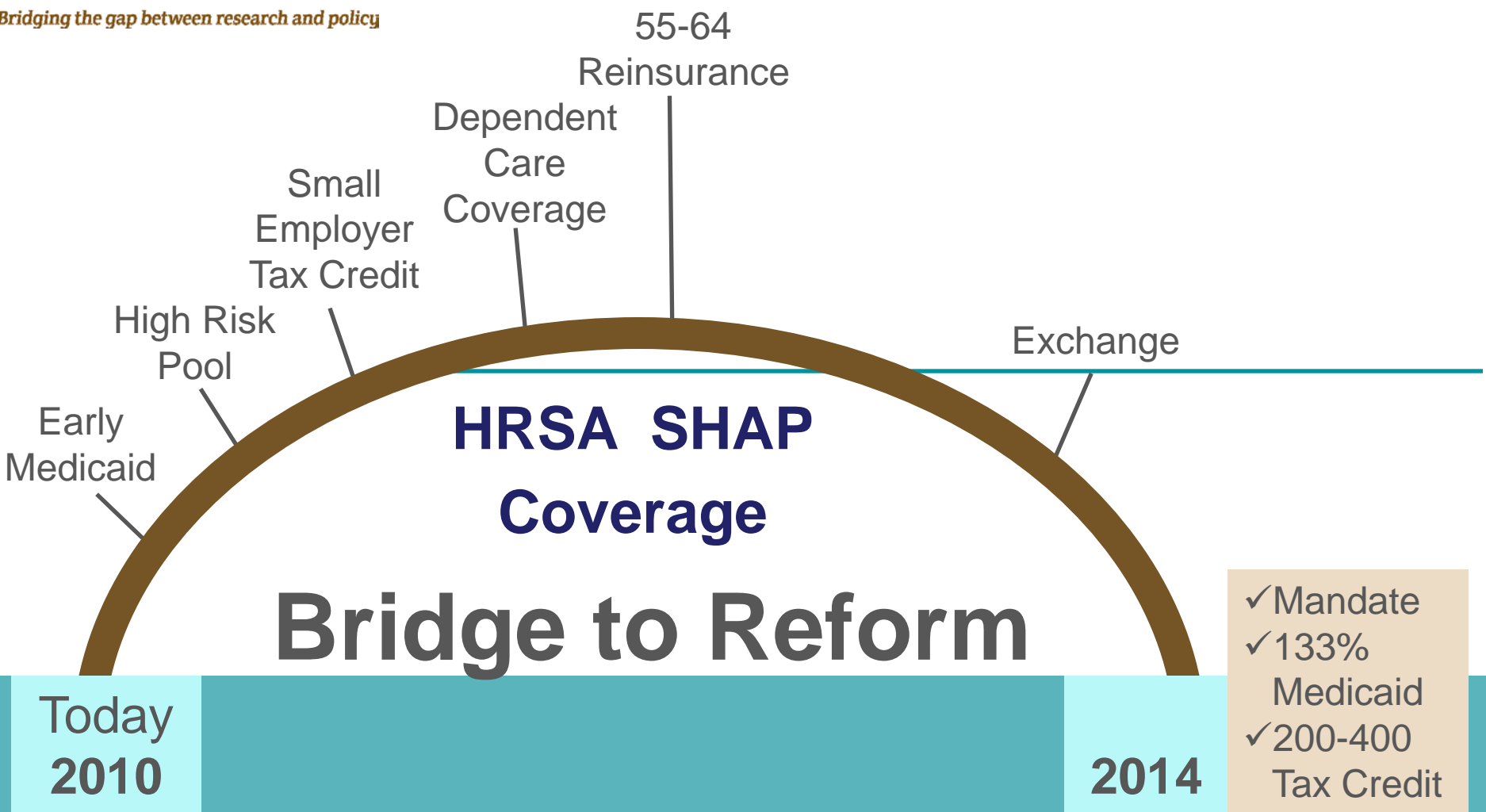
State Health Access Data Assistance Center

University of Minnesota, School of Public Health

SHAP Grantee Meeting

Washington, D.C.

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Medicaid Expansion in Affordable Care Act (ACA)

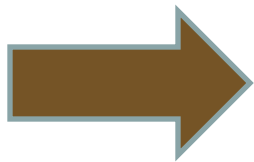
- New mandatory eligibility group for low-income individuals – 2014 implementation date
- Includes all persons with family incomes up to 133% of the FPL who are **not**:
 - Age 65 and older
 - Eligible for Part A Medicare or enrolled in Part B
 - Undocumented (*i.e. unauthorized*) immigrants



Newly covered include children 6-19, parents of covered children, childless adults

New Medicaid Income Eligibility

- Eligibility based on income only, no asset test
- Income based on Modified Adjusted Gross Income (MAGI) (*excluding SSI, LTC,*)
- Includes income adjustment of 5 percentage points.



133% of FPL becomes an effective level of 138%

Additional Exceptions to the Individual Mandate

- Financial hardship
- Religious objections
- American Indians and Alaska Natives
- Incarcerated individuals
- Those for whom the lowest cost plan option exceeds 8% of income, and
- Those whose income is below the tax filing threshold

And the Undocumented

What does national health reform mean for undocumented immigrants?

- Continuation of the policy that they are not eligible for Medicaid or CHIP
- Exceptions:
 - Emergency services for income-eligible undocumented immigrants
 - States have option of covering prenatal care for pregnant women **including undocumented** under CHIP
- Cannot participate in new federal or state health insurance exchanges

Who are undocumented immigrants?

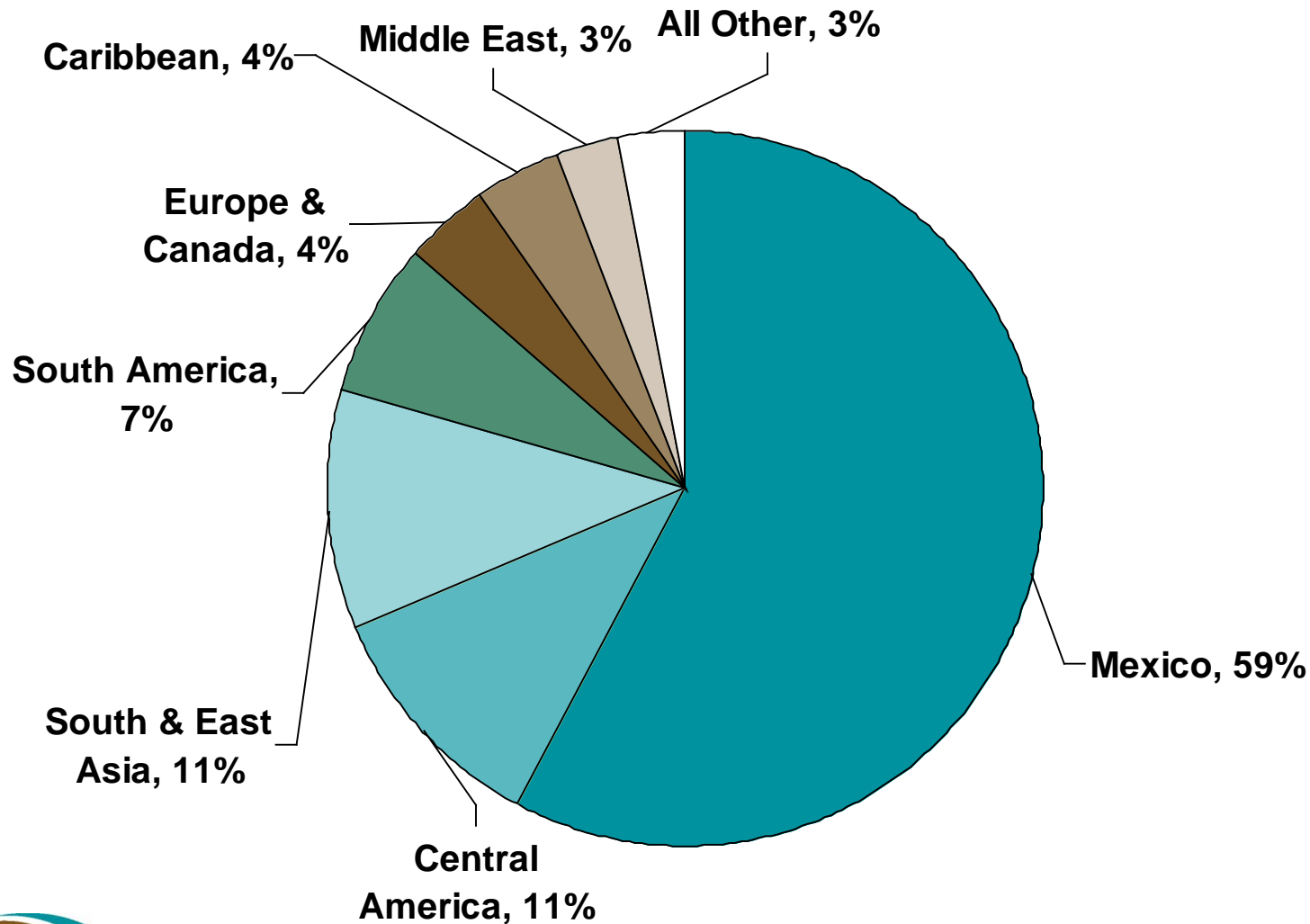
- Individuals who enter the country without approval by immigration authorities
- Individuals who violate the terms of a temporary admission
 - i.e. overstaying tourist/student visa without adjusting immigration status

Source: Congressional Budget Office (2007) definition of “unauthorized” immigrants

How many undocumented immigrants are there?

- No direct estimate of size of population
 - Citizenship status known in most national surveys
 - But immigration status for non-citizens is not captured in any national data source
- Pew Hispanic Center (PHC)
 - Uses model-based approach to estimate size of the undocumented population
 - **11.9 million people in 2008**
 - **4% of total U.S. population**
 - **5% of workforce**

Estimated Distribution of Undocumented Population by Country/Region of Birth



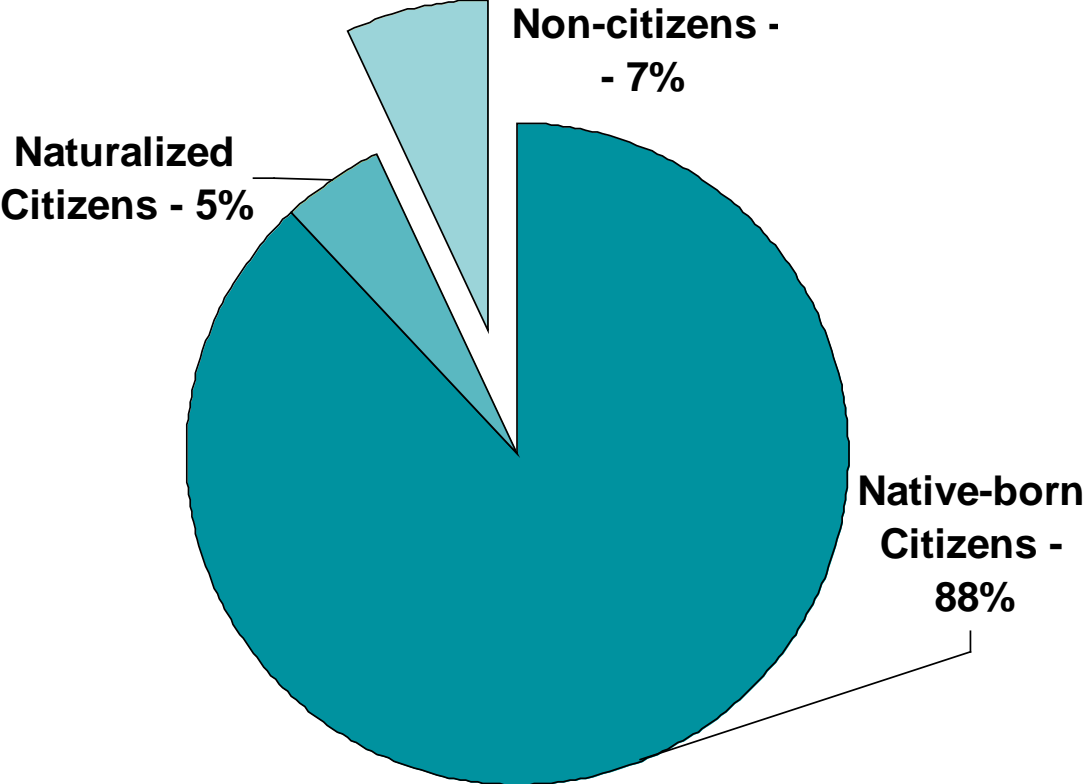
Research Questions

- How many low-income adults will be excluded from Medicaid because of their legal status?
- Who are they?
- Where do they live?
- Where will they get health care?

Data and Approach

- 2008 American Community Survey (ACS)
 - Large national survey with state-representative samples
 - Provides data on demographic, socioeconomic, and geographic characteristics of U.S. population
 - Asks citizenship, country of origin, and years in the U.S., but does not ask immigration status
- SHADAC assigns immigration status to non-citizens whose legal status is unknown

U.S. Population by Citizenship Status



Source: ACS, 2008.

Three-Step Method for Assigning Immigration Status

1. Assign status as “legal” to those highly likely to be citizens, permanent residents, or legal immigrants
 - U.S. born citizens
 - Foreign-born residents who arrived prior to 1980
 - Foreign-born residents who reported naturalized citizenship
 - Foreign-born residents in occupations requiring legal status
 - Foreign-born residents participating in public programs that require legal status
 - Foreign-born residents who, given country of birth and year of entry into the US, are likely legal under the Temporary Protected Status program
- Remainder of ACS sample assigned “unknown” legal status

Three-Step Method for Assigning Immigration Status

2. Predict legal vs. undocumented status for those in ACS sample using external data source
 - Predictive model from Urban Institute based on 2004 Current Population Survey file that includes estimates of legal status based on PHC framework
 - Use model coefficients to predict probability of legal status for ACS sample

Three-Step Method for Assigning Immigration Status

3. Combine 1st and 2nd steps and benchmark to PHC results for share of undocumented in each state
 - *for states with small share of undocumented immigrants, we group states to increase sample*

Preliminary Findings

- What is the estimated size of the undocumented non-elderly adult population in the U.S.?
10.4 million
- How many non-elderly adults are estimated to be eligible for Medicaid under 2014 income rules?
33.6 million low-income non-elderly adults
- How many of those low-income adults are likely to be undocumented immigrants?
3.7 million or 10.9% of all low-income non-elderly adults

Characteristics of Low-income Non-elderly Adults in U.S., by Assigned Legal Status

All non-elderly adults with family income \leq 138% FPL

	Citizens & “Assigned Legal” Immigrants†	Likely Undocumented Immigrants
Total	30.0 Million	3.7 Million
Female	58%	52%
Age		
18 to 34	51%	58%
35 to 44	18%	28%
45 to 54	17%	11%
55 to 64	14%	4%
Married	29%	56%
Children under 19 in household	49%	76%
Less than high school education	24%	56%

†Includes those who report birth/naturalized citizenship, permanent residents, and immigrants assigned “likely legal” status

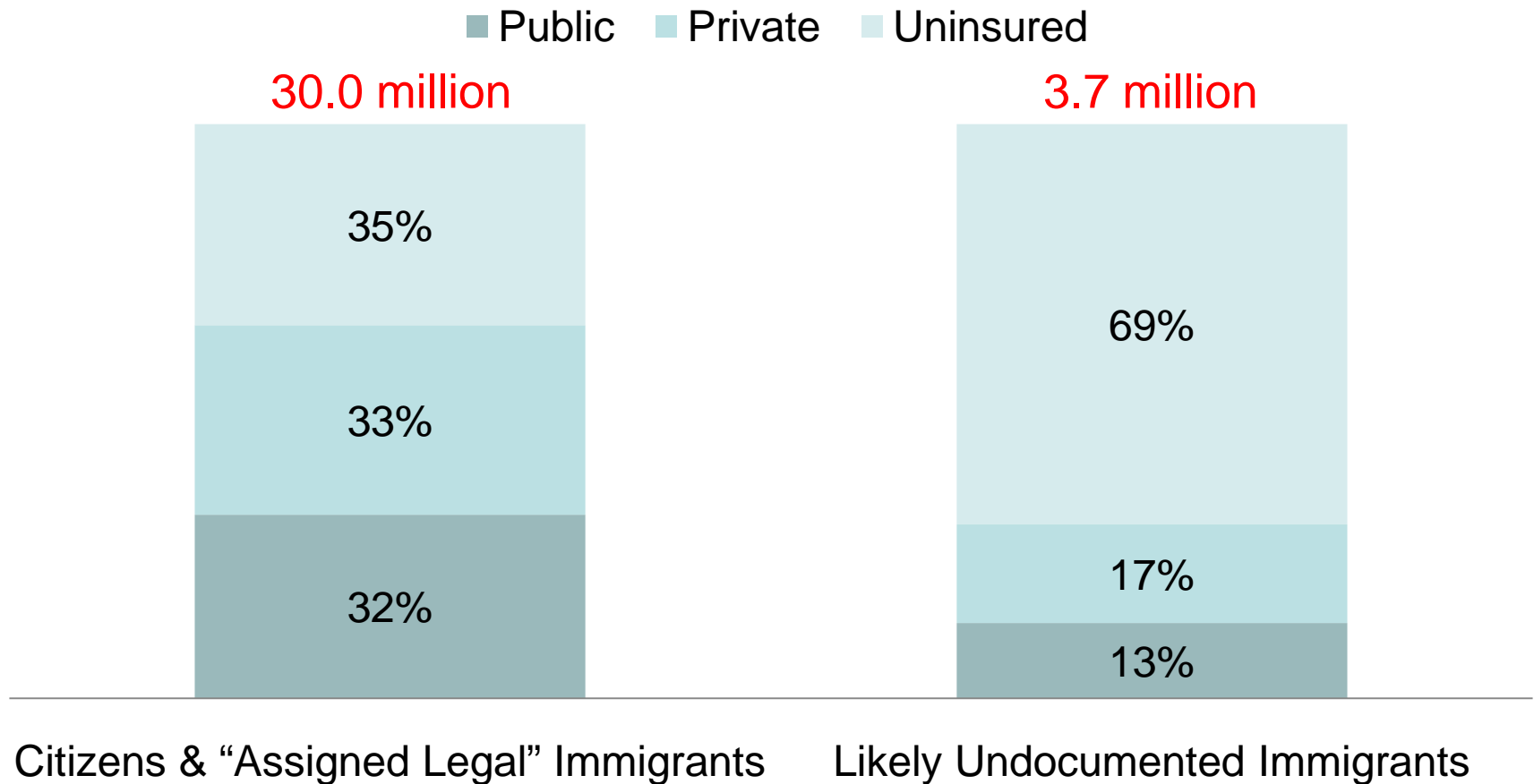
Characteristics of Low-income Non-elderly Adults in U.S., by Assigned Legal Status

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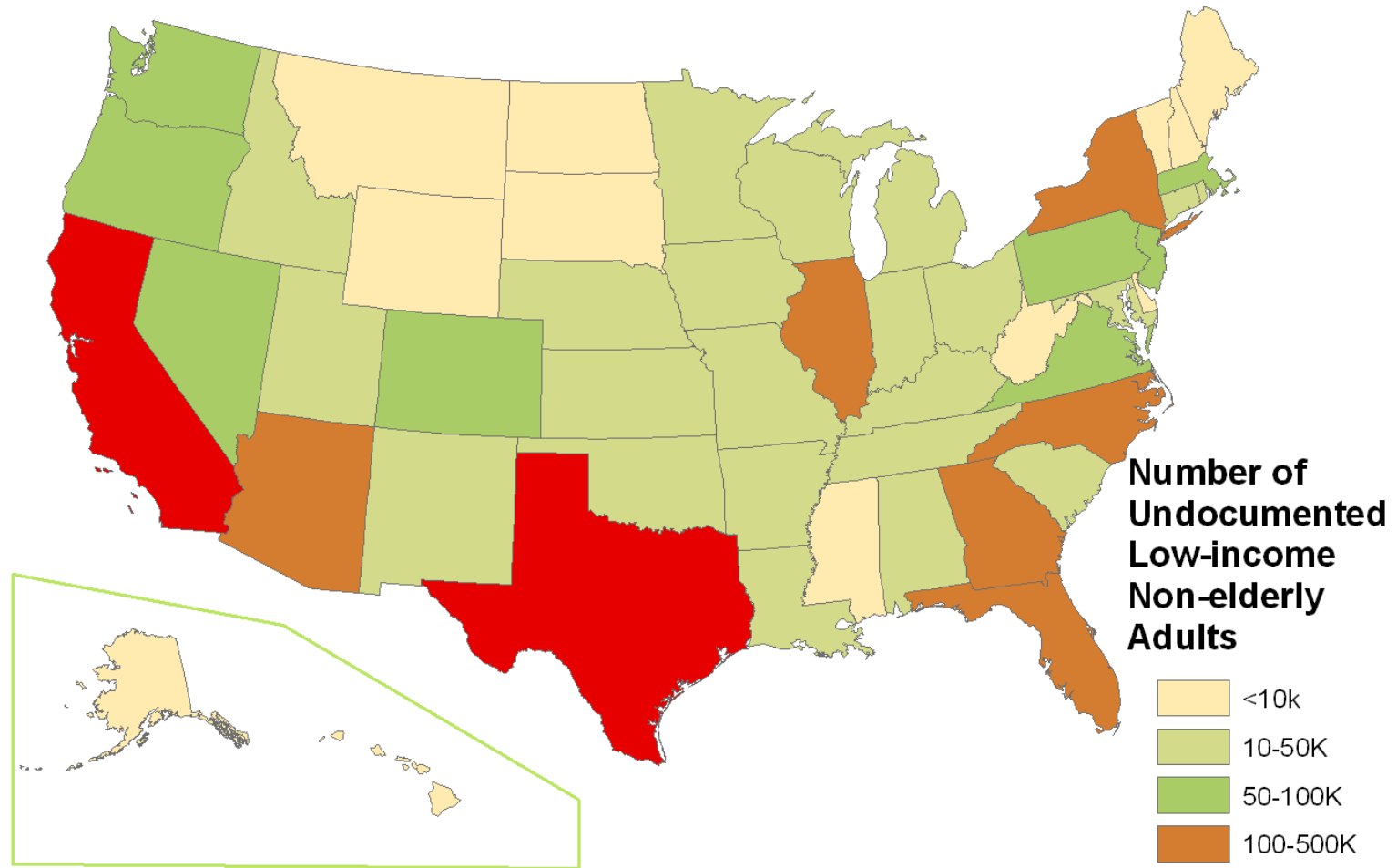
	Citizens & “Assigned Legal” Immigrants [†]	Likely Undocumented Immigrants
Total	30.0 Million	3.7 Million
Insurance coverage		
Public	32%	13%
Private	33%	17%
Uninsured	35%	69%
Anyone in family worked last year	67%	81%
Family income relative to FPL		
Less than 50%	35%	27%
50 to 99%	35%	37%
100% and above	30%	36%
Lives in metropolitan area	71%	90%

[†]Includes those who report birth/naturalized citizenship, permanent residents, and immigrants assigned “likely legal” status

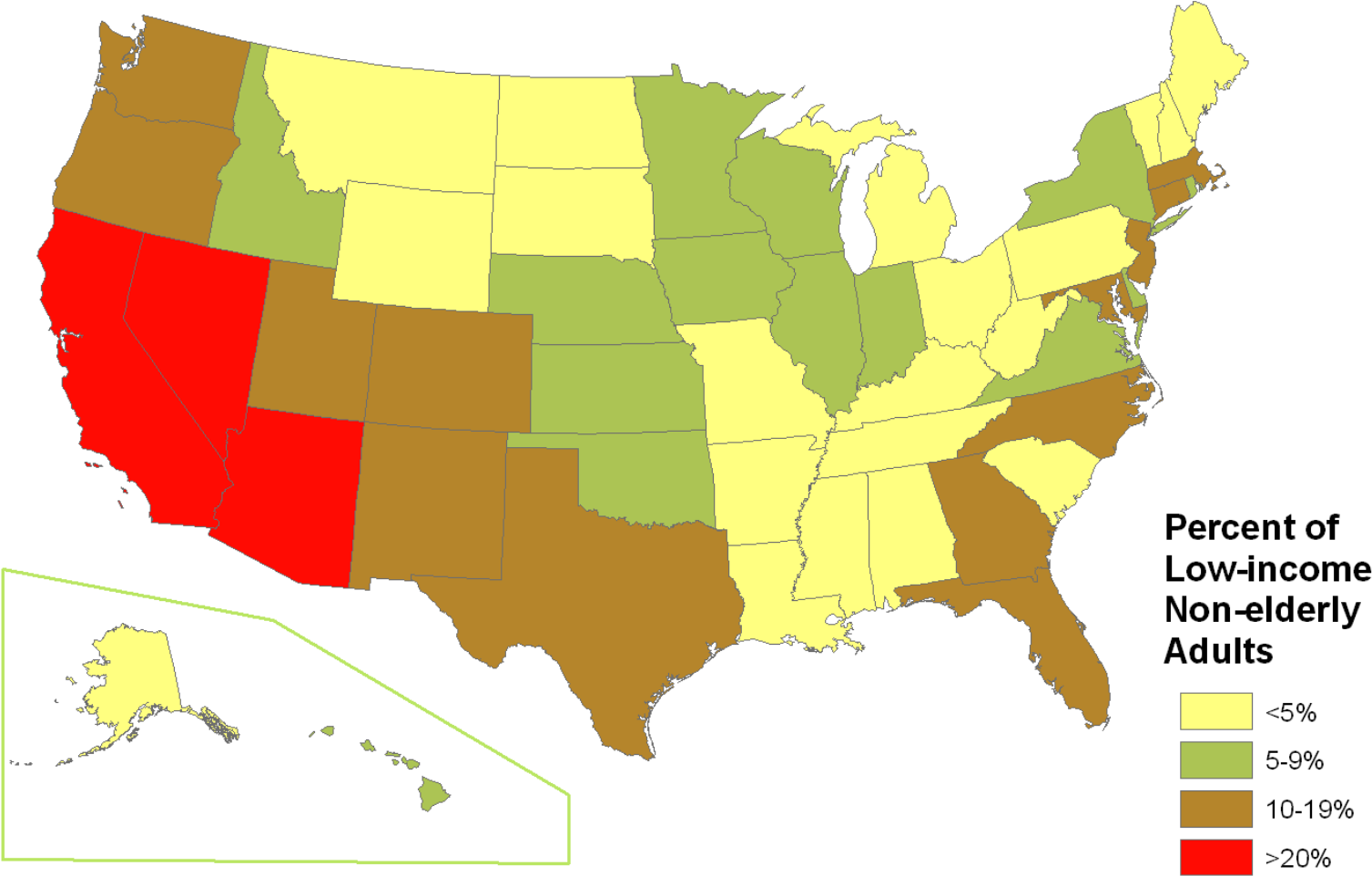
Coverage Status of Those Estimated to be Income Eligible for Medicaid in 2014



Number of low-income undocumented adults by state



Proportion of low-income adults who are undocumented *within* each state



Limitations

- ***Preliminary*** estimates
 - More work needed to assess sensitivity of estimates
 - Update the Urban 2004 CPS input
- Assignment of legal foreign-born population likely includes legal residents who have resided in U.S. for less than 5 years
 - Our estimate is conservative
- Do not address the 5-year waiting period for Medicaid eligibility for legal residents
 - but these legal residents will be able to purchase through exchanges

Policy Implications

- A substantial number of income-eligible undocumented immigrants will not be covered under the 2014 Medicaid changes
 - Up to an estimated **3.7 million** adults
- Burden on the safety net not be evenly distributed across states
 - States with disproportionate number: CA, TX
 - States with disproportionate share: CA, AZ, NV
- Emergency departments and safety-net clinics are key providers & demand may increase under health reform

Policy Implications

- In addition, burden of providing care for undocumented immigrants will not be spread evenly across providers
- Concern over increasing link between undocumented immigration status and use of the safety net
 - **Potentially more difficult to address public health issues—e.g., H1N1**
 - **Undocumented immigrants may be less likely to seek care in a timely manner leading to poorer health outcomes and more costly care**
 - **Undermine support for the safety net**

Next steps

- Sensitivity analysis of assignment approach
- Update data inputs and refine model
- Examine health care access, use and costs of undocumented immigrants
- Assess capacity of safety-net clinics/providers to fill this gap

Acknowledgments

- **SHADAC Co-Authors**

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