



## State Health Access Data Assistance Center *Electronic Newsletter – October 9, 2008*

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### **Announcements**

#### **Updated Small Area Health Insurance Estimates Available**

The U.S. Census Bureau released an update to their model-based Small Area Health Insurance Estimates (SAHIE) today. SHADAC will host a conference call to discuss these estimates on October 14 at 11:30 AM EDT. This call is open to the public but reservations are required to [shadac@umn.edu](mailto:shadac@umn.edu) or 612-624-4802. More information on these estimates is available at the [SAHIE web site](#).

#### **Save the Date: SHADAC to Host State Survey Workshop in January 2009**

SHADAC will host a one-day meeting on January 13, 2009 in Washington DC to provide up-to-date information on technical issues related to household surveys and the measurement of health insurance coverage. Some of the topics to be addressed include changes in technology that impact telephone surveys, the Medicaid undercount, and updates on federal sources of data. SHADAC will have limited travel funds available for state analysts to attend the meeting. Further details will be announced in the next few weeks.

#### **RWJF Issues Call for Proposals for Coverage Ideas from the Field**

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation issued a [call for proposals](#) that will increase the likelihood that the nation's health care debate will lead to solutions and build momentum to drive federal policy-makers to act. . Up to \$2 million will be allocated to support grants up to \$400,000 for this purpose. The grant period will begin in May 2009 and extend for up to two years. Application Deadline: Dec. 2, 2008. [Learn more details and how to apply](#).

#### **Kaiser Releases Results from Employer Health Benefits Survey**

The Kaiser Family Foundation has release results from the Employer Health Benefits 2008 Annual Survey. This annual survey of employers provides a detailed look at trends in employer-sponsored health coverage, including changes in premiums, employee contributions, cost-sharing provisions, and other relevant information. The results are not representative at the state level, but do provide good information on trends in employer coverage. Information is available at the [EHBS web site](#).

#### **KIDS COUNT Data Center Resource Available**

The [KIDS COUNT Data Center](#), an initiative of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, contains state- and city-level data for over 100 measures of child well-being, including all the measures regularly used in our popular KIDS COUNT Data Book and The Right Start for America's Newborns. This easy-to-use, online database allows you to generate custom reports for a geographic area or to compare areas on a topic.

### **Presentations**

#### **Davern Speaks at Washington Statistical Society on November 13, 2008**

SHADAC's Michael Davern will present "Administrative Data in Support of Policy Relevant Statistics: The Medicaid Undercount Project" at a November 13 meeting in Washington DC sponsored by the Washington Statistical Society (WSS). This event is conducted in partnership with the Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology's Subcommittee on the Statistical Uses of Administrative Records and is part of their new [seminar series on Administrative Data in Support of Policy Relevant Statistics](#). This seminar is open to the public; see the seminar link for attendee information.

#### **SHADAC Presentation at Minority Health Conference**

SHADAC's Pamela Johnson and Donna Spencer will present "Healthcare Coverage and Access for Race, Ethnic, and Immigrant (REI) Groups: A Summary of National Survey Data Sources," at the [2008 Health Equality: Honoring Cultural While Closing Gap Conference](#) sponsored by the Minnesota Office of Minority and Multicultural Health on November 12-14. Their presentation will feature SHADAC's work in the area of making national data more accessible and usable for health policy at the state level.

## **Publications**

### **SHADAC Conference Call on Current Population Survey Estimates**

SHADAC hosted its annual conference call on August 27 to mark the release of the Census Bureau's annual report based on the results of the 2007 Current Population Survey (CPS). "Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2007". The report describes SHADAC's work with the Census Bureau and other federal agencies to evaluate discrepancies between different federal estimates of uninsurance. SHADAC has two resources available:

1. [Highlights from an Aug. 27 conference call](#) to discuss the CPS data release.
2. [CPS health insurance estimates](#) by type of coverage, age group and state for the four most recent years. These tables are the first installment of many that SHADAC will post to make the CPS estimates readily available and useful for states.

### **RWJF Releases "Comparing Federal Government Surveys that Count Uninsured People in America"**

Under Michael Davern's leadership SHADAC researchers compiled an issue brief released by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation on Aug. 28, "[Comparing Federal Government Surveys that Count Uninsured People in America](#)." This brief addresses the differences in estimated insurance coverage rates between the three different federal surveys: the Current Population Survey, the National Health Interview Survey, and the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey.

### **SHADAC's High-Risk Pool Case Study**

The Rockefeller Institute of Government's Health Policy Research Center has issued a series of reports on private insurance coverage for small businesses. The reports, funded by the New York State Health Foundation, include a nationwide scan of the various strategies states are using to try to address the growing problem of small-group coverage. There are also three in-depth case studies on the strategies being used by Maine, Minnesota, and New Jersey and a comprehensive report that combines what was learned from the state scan and field research. SHADAC researchers Donna Spencer and Lynn Blewett prepared the in-depth case study "[Individual High Risk Pools: A Case Study of the Minnesota Comprehensive Health Association](#)." All reports are available for download at [www.rockinst.org](http://www.rockinst.org).

### **SHADAC Publication on Local Access to Care Programs**

Lynn Blewett, Jeanette Ziegenfuss and Mike Davern published "Local Access to Care Programs (LACPs): New Developments in the Access to Care for the Uninsured" in the September issue of the Milbank Fund Quarterly (volume 86, issue 3, pages 459-479). These safety net programs fall outside traditional private and publicly subsidized insurance programs but have a formal enrollment process, eligibility determination, and enrollment fees that give enrollees access to a network of providers that have agreed to offer free or reduced-price health care services. The forty-seven LACPs documented in this article were categorized into four general models: three-share programs, national provider networks, county-based indigent care, and local provider-based programs. Reprints of the article may be requested by sending an email to [shadac@umn.edu](mailto:shadac@umn.edu).

## **News from States**

### **The Vermont Household Survey is Underway**

The 2008 Vermont Household Health Insurance Survey is now in the field. This survey will collect detailed information from over 4,000 households to inform the administration and state legislature as they continue to develop affordable programs for Vermonters to get high quality health insurance and access to health care. The Department of Banking, Insurance, Securities and Health Care Administration (BISHCA) will provide a report of survey results to the legislature in January at the beginning of the 2009 legislative session.

### **Washington State survey also in the field**

The Washington State Population Survey began fielding in spring of 2008 for the sixth time since 1998. It focuses primarily on issues of employment, family poverty, in-migration, health, and health insurance coverage. The 2008 survey data is of particular importance as state policymakers work to improve the economic conditions in the state. Information is available the [survey's web site](#).

## **Other News**

### **Insurance Coverage: Is a Reported Decline in the Number of Uninsured Good News?**

Changes in Health Care Financing and Organization (HCFO) has released "[Insurance Coverage: Is a Reported Decline in the Number of Uninsured Good News?](#)" This review of grant projects puts the coverage issues in perspective with the newly released data from the Census Bureau showing that uninsurance rates for health coverage have declined.

### **RWJF Compiles Assessment of Research on Insurance Coverage**

David Colby of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has prepared a review of the foundation's work on the issue of insurance coverage. In August he released "[The State of Research on the Uninsured: Putting Census Estimates in Perspective.](#)" highlighting some of the important findings from RWJF-supported projects relating to defining the extent of the problem and possible solutions, examining how the policy environment has changed since the last attempt at national health care reform in 1993–94, and assessing state efforts at coverage expansions.