

The American Community Survey

In this report, we analyze data from the American Community Survey (ACS). The ACS is an annual survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau that includes questions on a wide range of topics, including demographics, income, employment, and health insurance (beginning in 2008). The ACS is a mixed-mode survey that includes responses from mail, telephone, and in-person interviews. Nationally, about 4.5 million people respond to the ACS each year. The ACS collects data in every county in the nation, and its large sample size allows for more precise state-level estimates than other 50-state surveys. The sample is restricted to the non-institutional population. The data analysis for this report was performed with the ACS public use microdata sample. Standard errors were produced using the Taylor series approximation (STATA, Version 15).ⁱ

Children

Children are defined in this report as individuals age 0 to 18.

Insurance Coverage

The ACS collects data on all sources of health insurance coverage that a person has at the time of the survey. For this report, SHADAC analyzed the ACS data on health insurance by primary source of insurance coverage. If multiple sources of coverage were reported for a child, employer-sponsored insurance (ESI) was considered primary over public sources of insurance such as Medicaid and CHIP. Primary coverage for children was assigned based on a hierarchy: 1) ESI or military; 2) Medicaid or CHIP; 3) Individual; 4) Medicare; 5) uninsured. The Medicaid category used in this report comprises public coverage, including the small number of children with Medicare coverage (0.3% nationally in 2016 and 2017). Private health insurance includes ESI/military and individual coverage. Additional estimates of children's health insurance coverage for all coverage type breakdowns—private, public, insured, uninsured, ESI/military, individual, Medicaid/CHIP, Medicare—are available from SHADAC's State Health Compare (<http://statehealthcompare.shadac.org>).

Income

To measure family poverty, SHADAC included the total income for all individuals in the health insurance unit (HIU). The health insurance unit is a narrower definition of family that more accurately reflects whose income is included when assessing public program eligibility for an individual.ⁱⁱ We divided total income by the Federal poverty guidelines (FPG) produced by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to calculate the income as a percentage of FPG. In 2017, the FPG for a family of four was \$24,600 (with the exception of Alaska and Hawaii).

Race/Ethnicity

For race/ethnicity, "White" is defined in this report as white-alone, non-Hispanic. "Nonwhite" is all other races or two or more races, excluding Hispanic. "Hispanic" is defined as any-Hispanic.

Education

In this report, parental education refers to the highest educational attainment among adults age 25 and older in the family (health insurance unit).

Reliability of Estimates

Estimates with relative standard errors (standard error/estimate) greater than 30 percent may be less reliable and are indicated in this report by \wedge . Estimates with no observed sample cases are suppressed and indicated by --.

ⁱ StataCorp. 2017. Stata Statistical Software: Release 15. College Station, TX: StataCorp LLC

ⁱⁱ SHADAC and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. March 2012. Defining Family for Studies of Health Insurance Coverage. Available at: http://www.shadac.org/files/shadac/publications/SHADAC_Brief27.pdf