

The New Numbers: Health Insurance Reform Cannot Wait in Missouri

Last week, the U.S. Census released its new numbers for the uninsured. The results are sobering and confirm that health insurance reform cannot wait another year.

Nationwide, the number of uninsured increased from 39.8 million in 2001 to 46.3 million in 2008. The facts below underscore the urgency of health insurance reform for residents of Missouri.

- The status quo is not an option. The number of uninsured in Missouri has increased from 524,000 in 2001 to 739,000 in 2008. The percent of non-elderly adults without insurance increased from 13.5% to 17.5%. And this number only considers people who are uninsured for an entire year – it does not include people in Missouri who have more recently lost coverage through the recession, or who had shorter gaps in their coverage.
- Private coverage is eroding under the status quo. The percentage of people with employer-based coverage decreased from 77.3% of the population in 2001 to 68.4% in 2008.
- More workers are being left without protection from health care costs. Too many workers in Missouri do not have health coverage, at 451,000 in 2008. And the proportion of workers from Missouri without insurance has increased, from 12.6 % in 2001 to 15.8% in 2008.
- The problem of the uninsured is a problem that crosses income brackets. The new Census numbers also drive home the fact that everyone in Missouri is vulnerable to losing health insurance. An additional 32,000 people from high-income households are now uninsured.

<http://www.healthreform.gov/reports/statehealthreform/missouri.html>