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Uninsured Increased Significantly in Missouri in 2006, by over 103,500

The number of uninsured in Missouri increased by over 103,500 in 2006 as compared to 2005 (see Table 1), according to data released by the U.S. Census Bureau today.

The Census Bureau data were collected in March 2007, but reflect health insurance coverage in 2006, so they are the first data to fully reflect the effects of statewide Medicaid cuts enacted in Missouri during 2005, and fully phased in by the fall of 2005. Administrative estimates from the State of Missouri have shown that over 100,000 persons lost Medicaid eligibility during 2005¹, but until today it was not fully known how many persons were not able to obtain other insurance coverage.

Year	Total Number of Uninsured	Percent of Population	Increase in Uninsured
2006	771,682	13.3%	103,536
2005	668,146	11.7%	

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census.²

Uninsured in Missouri and the U.S.

The number of people without health insurance in Missouri rose from 668,146 to 771,682 from 2005 to 2006, an increase of over 15 percent in the number of uninsured. In 2006 over 13.3 percent of Missourians lacked health insurance coverage, as compared to only 11.7 percent that lacked coverage in 2005. The change in the number of uninsured between 2005 and 2006, although based on a statistical sample, is statistically significant.³

Nationwide the number of uninsured increased from 44.8 million to 47.0 million from 2005 to 2006, an increase of 4.9 percent, a much smaller increase than found in Missouri, further indicating

that Missouri is an outlier in its changes in the uninsured.

As would be expected, the Census Bureau found that the biggest change in Missouri's insurance coverage from 2005 to 2006, was a large drop in Medicaid coverage of over 60,000. This was offset by a large increase in Medicare coverage of over 100,000. There were insignificant changes in other coverage rates – employer or direct purchase (individual insurance) coverage rates.

Conclusion and Policy Significance

The number of uninsured in Missouri rose significantly from 2005 to 2006, a period that coincided with the implementation of significant reductions in Medicaid eligibility. This suggests that further attempts to address health insurance coverage in Missouri need to seriously address the effects of the 2005 Medicaid policy changes.

CONTACT INFORMATION: For further information on this report please contact Professor Timothy D. McBride, Division Head of Health Policy, School of Public Health, Saint Louis University, (314) 977-4094, mcbriedet@slu.edu

NOTES AND SOURCES:

¹For administrative eligibility changes in Medicaid see: <http://www.dss.mo.gov/mis/clcounter/history.htm>.

²The Census Bureau's data are from 2007 Current Population Survey (CPS). The population represented is the civilian non-institutionalized population living in Missouri. Most of the data were collected in March, and are fully described or here: <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/hlthins/hlthins.html>. The numbers presented in Table 1 are drawn from: <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/hlthins/historic/hihist4.html>

³The Census Bureau reports the standard errors of its estimates for the uninsured in 2005 and 2006 (42,000 and 44,000 respectively) and these can be used to compute a confidence interval for the uninsured. The pooled standard error for the difference between estimates is 50,904, implying that the confidence interval at the 95% level is {671,910; 871,454} which does not contain the estimate of 668,146 from 2005, so the change from 2005 to 2006 is significant.