



Michigan League FOR Human Services

Sept. 10, 2009

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Note: Detroit, Kalamazoo and Lansing contacts below

Jump in the number of uninsured makes case for health reform, strong safety net

LANSING -- Michigan suffered the third-largest increase of the uninsured in the country, according to a U.S. Census report released today, with more than 1 million people in the state going without health insurance.

Michigan's uninsured population averaged 11.7 percent in 2007-08, up from 10.4 percent in 2005-06. While the jump was the largest percentage increase except for Alaska and New Mexico, Michigan's rate is still better than the national average. Nationally, 15.3 percent of the population lacked health insurance in 2007-08.

Looking back to the start of the decade, there were 9.1 percent uninsured in Michigan in 2000-01, compared with 13.9 percent nationally.

The findings also made clear that employer-sponsored health insurance is falling at an alarming rate. Over the decade, 833,000 people in Michigan lost employer-sponsored coverage.

The uninsured are those who go the entire year without any insurance, either private insurance or government-sponsored insurance. Government insurance includes military insurance, Medicaid, Medicare and MICHild.

"We view this as good news, and bad news. Michigan still enjoys better-than-average rates when it comes to health insurance, but the number of uninsured is rising fast and the drop in employer-sponsored insurance is frightening. Michigan is losing ground," said Michigan League for Human Services President and CEO Sharon Parks.

Parks said the report's findings make it critical that state policymakers maintain Michigan's safety net. The Department of Community Health and the Department of Human Services have been targeted for large cuts under plans passed by the Senate and offered by Gov. Jennifer Granholm for the budget year that begins Oct. 1.

Increases in the number of uninsured, documented in this report, further confirm the need for national health care reform.

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“This costs all of us more in the long run, because the uninsured are less likely to receive preventive care that catches illnesses and conditions while they are easily treatable,” Parks said.

Please see a new report by the League on the need for reform: [A Case for National Health Care Reform](#).

The new Census numbers cover 2008, so they don't capture the heart of the recession, which worsened dramatically at the end of 2008. Michigan's unemployment rates began to climb dramatically around that time.

Providers who work with the uninsured who are available to speak with the media today are:

Barry E. Saltman MD
Care Free Medical & Dental
5135 S. Pennsylvania
Lansing MI, 48911
Phone: (517) 887-5922 Ext. 2
Cell: (517) 256-9739
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The Michigan League for Human Services is a nonprofit, nonpartisan statewide policy and advocacy group for low-income citizens. It has a network of more than 1,500 individuals and organizations from business, labor, human service professions, faith-based organizations as well as concerned citizens

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