

SHADAC News — March 24, 2009

## Announcements

### State Survey Workshop Recap

SHADAC hosted a workshop entitled, "Current Issues in Survey Methods for State Health Surveys" on January 13th in Washington DC attended by more than 60 people including representatives from 15 states.

Nationally-renowned survey experts presented information on: (1) the increasing use of cell phones and the barriers they create when conducting Random Digit Dial telephone surveys; and (2) the newest information on the Medicaid undercount and how to address in developing health insurance coverage estimates. We also heard updates on changes in the Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance System new state-level estimates from the National Health Interview Survey and an update on the American Community Survey.

[View the presentations](#)

### Census Research Data Center to Open at the University of Minnesota

SHADAC and the Minnesota Population Center (MPC) received approval from the National Science Foundation and U.S. Census Bureau to open the Minnesota Research Data Center (MNRDC) in January 2010. The RDC will provide a highly secure environment for the controlled use of non-public data for research. The center will offer researchers, who obtain appropriate approval, access to restricted datasets from the Census Bureau, National Center for Health Statistics and Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. These datasets form a critical part of the infrastructure for research in the fields of business, economics, epidemiology, geography, health services, population, public policy and sociology.

The new MNRDC will carry a health data focus - the only such center in the nation. The MPC is the largest distributor of worldwide demographic data, and the MNRDC will help facilitate the data improvement project work done by the MPC. The center will be co-directed by SHADAC's Mike Davern along with Cathy Fitch, Associate Director of the MPC.

### New State Survey Activity Page

SHADAC has a new resource of archived information on state-level data collection and research about health care coverage and access. This page on our site shows, for each state and territory, the years in which states conducted household, employer surveys and focus groups relating to health care coverage and access, with links to survey instruments and reports. We will continually update this page and welcome corrections and updates to [shadac@umn.edu](mailto:shadac@umn.edu).

[View the State Survey Activity Page](#)

### Meet SHADAC's New Coordinator

SHADAC has a new staff member in Marie Kirsch, recently hired as Research Coordinator. She brings experience working on the [Integrated Health Interview Survey](#) at the Minnesota Population Center. At SHADAC Marie is utilizing her organizational, computer, web development and communications skills to support our work, assuming many of the responsibilities previously managed by Karen Soderberg. Karen recently completed her Master of Science degree in Health Services Research, Policy and Administration at the University of Minnesota and will continue at SHADAC conducting research, assisting with data releases and overseeing SHADAC's communications.

### SHADAC is blogging!

Stay in tune with the latest news and commentary by reading SHADAC's blog. SHADAC researchers are posting their thoughts and observations on the latest news in our field. Look for a new posting on our home page every week or so, [www.shadac.org](http://www.shadac.org).

## Publications



### **State-level Wireless Substitution Estimates Released**

SHADAC has collaborated with the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) to develop model-based state-level estimates of the wireless-only population. NCHS released the estimates on March 11th with a detailed explanation of the modeling process. SHADAC also released a new issue brief, "The Impact of Wireless-only Households on State Surveys of Health Insurance Coverage". This brief examines the issues related to the increasing prevalence of wireless-only households as it relates to conducting telephone-based household surveys of health insurance coverage.

[View the NCHS Brief](#)

[View SHADAC's Issue Brief](#)

### **New State-by-State Analysis Released for Cover the Uninsured Week**

A new report, "At the Brink: Trends in America's Uninsured 1994-2007," was released in conjunction with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's (RWJF) Cover the Uninsured Week, March 22-28, 2009. Now in its seventh year, the campaign has become the largest nonpartisan mobilization in history seeking solutions for the 45.7 million Americans who are uninsured. The report, prepared by SHADAC research, chronicles state-by-state health coverage trends. Over the last 15 years, nearly every state has seen increased numbers of uninsured residents, greater costs for workers relative to income, and significant erosion of private coverage.

[View the report](#)

### **Medicaid Undercount Article Published**

"Accuracy of self-reported health insurance coverage among Medicaid enrollees," authored by Kathleen Call, Gestur Davidson, Michael Davern, E. Richard Brown, Jennifer Kincheloe and Justine Nelson, was recently published in *Inquiry* journal (volume 45, issue 4, pages 438-56). This research found that Medicaid enrollees are fairly accurate reporters of insurance status and type of coverage, but some do report being uninsured. The findings suggest that the Medicaid undercount should not undermine confidence in survey-based estimates of uninsurance.

[View the article](#)

## Presentations

### **Lynn Blewett Testified to Minnesota Legislature**

SHADAC's Lynn Blewett testified at the Minnesota Legislature on "The Economic Impact on Minnesota's Health Care Delivery System." For Minnesota, and probably many states, much of the impact from the economic downturn was not felt in the health care system until the last quarter of 2008. Minnesota's non-profit health system requires only annual reporting by hospitals, so the evidence in the data will not be seen until this time next year. Of particular concern is the potential increase in the number of uninsured due to increased unemployment and proposals to cut public programs, and increased out-of-pocket spending for consumers due to an increase in high-deductible plans and health savings accounts.

[View the presentation](#)

### **The Burden of Underinsurance**

SHADAC's Lynn Blewett presented new state-level estimates of "underinsurance" at the Kansas Health Institute (KHI) on January 23. She was the keynote speaker for a day-long convening on the issues related to those who have health insurance but whose coverage is inadequate to meet their health care needs. In addition to the academic perspective of defining and measuring underinsurance, the impact on the underinsured was clearly relayed by a panel of three Kansas citizens who faced significant financial distress because of inadequate health insurance coverage.

[View the presentation](#)

[View the KHI Report](#)

## News from the States

### Massachusetts State Health Survey Results Released

Findings from the 2008 Massachusetts Health Insurance Survey, released in January, show that there continues to be an increase in health insurance coverage since the Massachusetts health reform initiative in 2006, which included an individual mandate and the merger of the individual and small group markets. The newest estimates show that only 2.6% of the Massachusetts population and only 1.2% of children in the state are uninsured.

[View the report](#)

### Ohio Family Survey Results Released

Results from the 2008 Ohio Family Health Survey were released this month, showing that the number of uninsured adults rose during the past four years as unemployment increased, while fewer children lack insurance. The survey shows that 17% of adults ages 18 to 64, or 1.2 million people, lack health insurance. That's an increase of 2% since the study was last conducted in 2004. Four percent of Ohio's children are uninsured, down from 5.4% in 2004. But almost 70% of the 111,255 uninsured children in Ohio are from families with incomes below 200% of the federal poverty level, meaning they are eligible for taxpayer-funded insurance, but not enrolled.

[View the preliminary report](#)

### Pennsylvania Health Insurance Survey Results Released

Pennsylvania released results from its state household Health Insurance Survey in February. Results indicate that over 1,000,000 Pennsylvanians lacked health insurance coverage in 2008 and that uninsurance rates across all ages were up slightly from 7.5% in 2004 to 8.2% in 2008.

[View the report](#)

### Vermont Health Insurance Survey Results Released

Results from the 2008 Vermont Household Health Insurance Survey (VHHIS), released in January, show that 7.8% of Vermont residents are uninsured. This is a significant decrease of 2.2 percentage points in the since the 2005 survey. Children under the age of 18 had the lowest uninsured rate of 2.9%, down significantly from the 2005 rate of 4.9%.

[View the preliminary report](#)

SHADAC is a research and policy center at the University of Minnesota that provides technical assistance to state analysts and policy makers across the country in the areas of survey design, data collection and policy development, as well as research on factors contributing to health care coverage and access in the United States. SHADAC is funded by The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. For more information see [www.shadac.org](http://www.shadac.org)

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