

Estimates of health insurance coverage for 2004 and other key health indicators are now available from CDC's National Center for Health Statistics. NCHS has also released new national findings on sexual behaviors related to public health concerns.

## HEALTH INSURANCE UP FOR CHILDREN

Health insurance coverage for children showed continued improvement in 2004, and the percentage of working-age adults without insurance coverage, which had been climbing in recent years, did not increase last year, according to "Health Insurance Coverage: Estimates from the National Health Interview Survey, 2004."<sup>1</sup> The data, based on the National Health Interview Survey, provides estimates of insurance coverage for the United States in 2004 and, for the first time, the latest survey also includes statistics on insurance coverage for the nation's 10 largest states.

The report, which tracks insurance coverage since 1997, finds that the improvement in coverage for children reflects an increase in public coverage—including the State Children's Health Insurance Program—for poor and near-poor children. In 2004, more than 90% of America's children had health insurance at the time of the interview—a steady rise from the first report in 1997. In 2004, 9.4% of children—7 million children younger than 18 years of age—were without health insurance. In contrast, in 1997, about 14%—10 million children—lacked coverage. Among poor and near-poor children, lack of coverage dropped by about a third from 1997. For near-poor children, public coverage almost doubled, from 24% to 43% from 1997 to 2004. Nearly 70% of poor children under 18 years of age rely on public coverage.

Overall, 14.6% of the population—42.1 million Americans of all ages—was without current health insurance coverage in 2004, about the same level as in 1997. One in five working-age adults (ages 18–64) were without insurance in 2004. This number had been rising steadily in recent years but appears to have leveled off in 2004.

The survey produced health insurance coverage estimates for the 10 largest states. For the population younger than age 65, Michigan, New York, Ohio, and Pennsylvania had considerably lower rates of uninsured than the national average of 16%. Just over 20% were without health coverage in California and Florida, and about 27% lacked coverage in Texas.

These findings appear in "Health Insurance Coverage: Estimates from the National Health Interview Survey, 2004," gathered from the annual household survey with a sample of the nation's civilian non-institutionalized population. In 2004, the survey, conducted by CDC's National Center for Health Statistics, added questions to improve the accuracy of the estimates on insurance coverage. The report is available at [www.cdc.gov/nchs](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs).

## FEWER AMERICANS SMOKE BUT FEWER ARE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE IN LEISURE TIME

"Early Release of Selected Estimates Based on Data from the 2004 National Health Interview Survey"<sup>2</sup> presents the latest annual summary on key indicators of health that are tracked quarterly. It shows a number of advances in Americans' health in 2004, but also documents measures that are not moving in the right direction. In 2004, 20.9% of adults aged 18 years and older were current smokers, down from 24.7% in 1997. The percentage of adults who engaged in regular leisure-time physical activity declined from 32.8% in 2003 to 30.2% in 2004. Leisure-time physical activity had increased in the late 1990s, but then remained at about the same level before dropping in 2004.

Respondents in the National Health Interview Survey were asked to rate their health as excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor. In 2004, 66.5% of people of all ages described their health as excellent or very good, lower than the 2003 estimate of 67.5%. Less than 10% thought that their health was fair or poor. Other indicators include influenza vaccination, pneumococcal vaccination, obesity, excessive alcohol consumption, HIV testing, having a usual place to go for medical care, failing to obtain needed medical care, health insurance coverage, current asthma and asthma episodes, diagnosed diabetes, serious psychological distress, and needing help with personal care.

Other highlights from the 2004 data include:

- Flu vaccination estimates for adults are considerably lower in the last quarter of 2004 (October–December) compared with those months in 2002 and 2003, probably reflecting the shortage or delay of vaccine supplies during the past flu season. However, the percentage of adults ages 65 years and older who ever received a pneumococcal vaccination continues to increase from 42.4% in 1997 to 56.8% in 2004.
- More Americans failed to obtain needed medical care due to cost at some time during the past 12 months, up from 4.2 percent in 1998.
- The prevalence of diagnosed diabetes continued to increase since 1997; it is now at 7.0% among U.S. adults, up from 5.1% in 1997.

"Early Release of Selected Estimates Based on Data from the 2004 National Health Interview Survey"<sup>2</sup> is available on the CDC/NCHS Web site. For more information about the survey, go to: [www.cdc.gov/nchs/nhis.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nhis.htm).

## SEXUAL BEHAVIORS

A new report based on data from the 2002 National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG) presents data on sexual behaviors, related to public health concerns. The NSFG is a comprehensive, periodic survey—most recently conducted in 2002—that gathers data on fertility, reproductive health and sexual

behaviors that put people at risk of sexually transmitted diseases and unintended pregnancy. The survey found that just over a third of the men who had engaged in same-sex sexual contact in the year prior to the interview were tested for HIV. In 2002, the proportion of men 15–44 years of age who had a male partner in the 12 months prior to the interview was 2.9%, approximately 1.8 million men. However, in the same period, only 38% had been tested for HIV and 39% tested for other STDs, such as gonorrhea and chlamydia. Looking at lifetime sexual contact, 5.7% of males have had oral sex with another male at some time in their lives, and 3.7% have had anal sex with another male. HIV and STD risk is also elevated for men and women who have had anal sex with an opposite-sex partner. Forty percent of males ages 25–44 have had anal sex with a female, and 35% of females of this age have had anal sex with a male.

The 2002 NSFG, based on in-person interviews with a nationally representative sample of 12,571 males and females ages 15–44, covers a range of topics including family formation, marriage and divorce, fertility, pregnancy, contraception, and sexual behaviors. The measures of sexual behavior were collected using Audio Computer-Assisted Self-Interviewing, in which the respondent enters his or her own answers into the computer without telling them to an interviewer. This technique is used to protect the privacy of respondents and improve the accuracy of the survey results.

The NSFG collects data on other key indicators of sexual behavior, including those related to unintended pregnancy. Almost one-half of 17-year-olds and almost 70% of 19-year-olds have had vaginal sexual intercourse. However, these numbers are down from previous surveys conducted in the 1990s, and the 2002 survey also shows an increased use in condoms at first intercourse. New findings show that about 13% of males and 11% of females ages 15–17 have had oral sex but not vaginal intercourse. At ages 18–19, those percentages drop slightly to 11% of males and 9% of females. The survey documents differences by race and ethnicity. Fifteen percent of white males ages 15–19 have had heterosexual oral sex but not vaginal intercourse, compared to between 7%–8% of Hispanic and black males the same age. For females of the same age group, 12% of white, 10% of

Hispanic and 6% of black teens have had oral sex but not vaginal intercourse.

Other key findings in “Sexual Behavior and Selected Health Measures: Men and Women 15–44 Years of Age, United States, 2002” are:

- Among adults 25–44 years of age, 97 of men and 98 of women have had vaginal intercourse. About 90 of men and 88 of women have had oral sex, and 40% of men and 35% of women have had anal sex with an opposite-sex partner.
- About 90% of men and women consider themselves to be heterosexual. Approximately 2.3% of men consider themselves homosexual and 1.8% identify as bisexual. Among women, 1.3% consider themselves homosexual and 2.8% bisexual.
- In the total 15–44 year age group, 17% of Hispanic males, 22% of white males, and 33% of black males have had 15 or more female sexual partners in their lifetimes; among females, 4% of Hispanic women, 9% of black women, and 10% of white women have had 15 or more male partners in their lifetimes.

The report “Sexual Behaviors and Selected Health Measures” can be accessed on-line at the CDC/NCHS web site: [www.cdc.gov/nchs](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs). Other reports from the survey on contraception use and teen sexual activity are also available on the website.

---

NCHS Dataline is prepared by Sandra S. Smith, MPH, Public Affairs Officer, National Center for Health Statistics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

## REFERENCES

1. Health insurance coverage: estimates from the National Health Interview Survey, 2004. Hyattsville (MD): National Center for Health Statistics; 2005 Jun 29.
2. Early release of selected estimates based on data from the 2004 National Health Interview Survey. Hyattsville (MD): National Center for Health Statistics; 2005 Jun 29.
3. Mosher W, Chandra A. Sexual behaviors and selected health measures. *Vital and Health Statistics XXXX*;23:XX.