



## **NEWS RELEASE**

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# **Health Insurance Lacking for Iowans**

## ***New Census Data: Over 1 in 11 Iowans Go Without Coverage***

IOWA CITY, Iowa (Sept. 10, 2009) — Iowa's health-insurance shortage is worse in the latter part of this decade than the start as 9.4 percent of Iowans went without coverage in 2007-08, new Census data show.

“As Congress considers health-care reform, the importance of these numbers is clear,” said David Osterberg, executive director of the nonpartisan Iowa Policy Project (IPP). “When more than 1 in 11 Iowans don't have insurance, we know that for too many, the system is not working.”

Iowa Fiscal Partnership analysts from IPP and the Child & Family Policy Center (CFPC) said it was important to look at the trends for the state, as well as the national numbers.

Those state trends show 9.4 percent, or 279,000 Iowans, were without health coverage in either 2007 or 2008, on average, compared with 7.9 percent in 2000-01.

“Comparing two-year averages, the uninsurance rate in Iowa has grown by 19 percent, greater than the national increase of 10 percent,” said Christine Ralston, an IPP research associate.

Two-year averages are considered important for reviewing state-by-state data from the survey used to estimate national health-insurance coverage. For 2008 alone, the survey found over 46 million Americans — 46.3 million, compared with 45.7 million the previous year — were uninsured, or 15.4 percent.

“We will continue to hear much about the problem of uninsurance for 46 million Americans, as we should,” said Mike Crawford, a senior associate at CFPC and director of its Iowa Kids Count project. “But these Iowa trends are persistent. It's easy to miss the fact that while Iowa's health insurance problem is not as great as the national problem, Iowa's growth in the uninsurance rate has doubled the nation's since 2000-01.”

The data released Thursday by the Census Bureau are from the Current Population Survey (CPS), one of two surveys that are commonly cited for information related to issues regarding poverty and income in the United States. In recent years, Census has released information from both surveys on the same day. Later this month, Census will release information from the American Community Survey, which allows more time-specific analysis of poverty and income measures at the state and local level.

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The CPS information released today indicates little change for Iowa on poverty or median household income, using two-year averages — but those trends have not been favorable for Iowa.

According to the CPS data released today, about 275,000 Iowans were in poverty in 2007-08, on average, not a significant change from 2000-01, currently representing a 9.2 percent poverty rate.

The survey also found median household income in Iowa averaged \$50,465 in the surveys for those two years — also not statistically different from the 2000-01 average.

“The fact that there isn’t much change means simply that Iowans have not been doing better in this decade. And these surveys reflect data from only part of the current recession,” said Ralston, co-author of IPP’s recently released *State of Working Iowa 2009* report.

“It will be interesting to see what the other survey shows later this month, to get a better feel for the poverty problem and income stagnation in Iowa.”

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## Iowa Fiscal Partnership

*The Iowa Fiscal Partnership is a joint fiscal policy initiative of two nonprofit, nonpartisan Iowa-based organizations, the Child & Family Policy Center in Des Moines and the Iowa Policy Project in Iowa City. IFP reports are available at [www.iowafiscal.org](http://www.iowafiscal.org).*

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