

Friday, September 11, 2009 — Last update: 10:39 a.m. MDT

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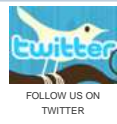
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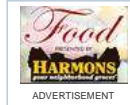
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Many Utahns uninsured in '08

Census data say state was 5th lowest in poverty from '06-08

By **Lee Davidson**
Deseret News

Published: Thursday, Sept. 10, 2009 11:21 p.m. MDT

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One of every seven Utahns under age 65 — or 361,000 of them — lacked health insurance last year, the Census Bureau reported on Thursday.

Nationally, the number of Americans without health insurance rose to 46.3 million as people lost jobs and insurance as the recession deepened.

That news, coming as the debate on health-care reform is red-hot in Congress, emerges in an annual report on income, poverty and insurance coverage based on extensive polling by the census.

Besides the data on unemployment, the report also shows that Utah had the fifth-lowest poverty rate among the states — at an average 8.8 percent for 2006-08. It also had the 10th-highest average household income among the states at \$58,820 for 2006-08.

But the news about the unemployed takes on the most urgency because of the ongoing political debate about it.

It showed that 85.7 percent of all Utahns under age 65 (when Medicare becomes available) had some type of health insurance during 2008. The census asked people if they had health insurance at any time of the year, so the actual number of those without it at some times of the year could be higher than the numbers indicate.

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The report said that 71.7 percent of Utahns reported having some insurance from a private employer during the year; 29.7 percent had some that was related to self-employment; and 10.1 percent had some from the government, such as Medicaid or Medicare — or both. (Nationwide, the number of Americans with some kind of government insurance tallied 87.4 million, or 29 percent of the population.)

The 14.3 percent of Utahns who were uninsured for all of 2008 was up from 13.7 percent in 2007. Job-based coverage in Utah was up by 2.8 percent, while participation in Medicaid in Utah dropped from 9.8 percent to 7 percent.

Story graphic

- By the numbers

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Judi Hilman, executive director of the Utah Health Policy Project, said the increase in job-based coverage "is certainly impressive and perhaps related to Utah's success in attracting larger employers." She added, "Due to their ability to self-insure and share risk, large employers are very likely to offer job-based coverage."

Still, Hilman said, "Utah and the nation's uninsured rates are unacceptably high and moving in the wrong direction."

She added, "The uninsured are our family members, friends, neighbors and fellow community members who are left to pray they won't get sick or injured and are just one health crisis away from financial ruin."

Speaking at the White House, President Barack Obama acknowledged that the number of those without coverage may be higher than the census figures, because they do not include the first half of 2009 when unemployment was steadily rising.

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I did listen to the lies...your plan will change, whatever Insurance...

Basically.... | Sept. 11, 2009 at 10:46 a.m.

@ so basically...

yesterday my 1 year old grandson got a doctor's...

exasperated | Sept. 11, 2009 at 10:36 a.m.

Obviously you didn't watch the speech the other night. Nothing in...

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