

Release

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New Data on Illinois' Uninsured Population

One million families have at least one uninsured member

(Chicago) April 30, 2007 -- According to a new report released by the Gilead Outreach and Referral Center there is hint of good news, but relatively a dark outlook for Illinois' uninsured population. The Gilead Center, a non-profit organization that connects the uninsured with affordable health care benefits and services, found that while recent eligibility expansions for the state's FamilyCare program and the creation of the All Kids program have lowered the number of uninsured children since the last reporting period in 2005, Illinois' uninsured population increased to more than 1.78 million individuals age 0-64, a two percent increase from 2004 – 2005.

Failing our Families

“When we broke down the numbers, we saw some light at the end of the tunnel in regard to providing health care coverage for our children,” Michael Taitel, PhD, President of the Gilead Center said. “But ultimately, we are failing our families when it comes to providing affordable health insurance coverage. Nearly one million families in Illinois have at least one uninsured family member, and 360,000 Illinois families with an annual income of over \$50,000 have at least one uninsured member.”

Who are the Uninsured in Illinois?

The Face of the Uninsured: A Detailed Description of Illinois' Uninsured, Gilead's fifth annual report, found that nearly 60 percent of Illinois' uninsured population is employed – a trend that is expected to continue. This report, based on data from the U.S. Census Bureau, looks at socioeconomic, racial and educational levels from those who live in Chicago, the metro suburban area and downstate Illinois and provides real life examples that reflect the face of the uninsured.

Add one – Gilead Center

“When we think of the uninsured, many people assume it’s only unemployed, welfare recipients who make up the numbers,” said Dr. Lawrence U. Haspel, Senior Vice-President of Metropolitan Chicago Healthcare Council and Gilead Center Board Treasurer. “The Gilead report puts a more accurate face on who the uninsured crisis in Illinois is affecting -- every ethnicity, and more and more middle class people who are being failed by the current system of employer-sponsored health coverage plans.”

Other Key Findings

- **26 percent of the uninsured population is 19-29 years of age; the fastest growing uninsured segment in Illinois**
- **The highest percent of uninsured individuals in the state were Hispanic at 30 percent, non-Hispanic African Americans at 26 percent and non-Hispanic White at 12 percent**
- **26 percent of the total population of Chicago is with out health insurance – 551,563 people or the population equivalence of the entire downstate population**
- **Of the 2.4 million full-time workers in the Chicago metra suburban area, over 12 percent or 298,308 are uninsured. Most work in small firms with less than 100 employees (22 percent work in firms with fewer than 25 employees; 12 percent work in firms with 25-99 employees)**
- **Individuals between the age of 19-29 in downstate Illinois are disproportionately impacted by being uninsured. Although they are the smallest population of downstate inhabitants (612,703 of 3,760,420 inhabitants total), they account for over 25 percent of the uninsured population.**

Making Connections

“Over the years, Gilead has been witness to the rise of our state’s uninsured first-hand. While we have made a difference in the lives of over 120,000 individuals whom we have connected with health benefit programs, we know the only way to fully address this issue is to continue to present data and analysis on Illinois’ uninsured to guide reform measures greatly needed at the state and federal levels of government,” Taitel said.

Nationally, the number of uninsured Americans has increased by about one million people annually, and it shows no sign of slowing down. According to the latest Census Bureau report, approximately 47 million people in the United States are uninsured -- more than the aggregate population of 24 states plus the District of Columbia – costing the nation an estimated \$40 billion in medical debt.

Add two – Gilead

The Gilead Outreach and Referral Center commissioned faculty at the University of Illinois at Chicago, School of Public Health to analyze data to support *The Face of the Uninsured: A Detailed Description of Illinois' Uninsured*.

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Editor's note: A full copy of the report is available on the Gilead Center Web site at www.gileadcenter.org

Data Source: The Gilead Outreach and Referral Center's 2007 annual report on the uninsured, *The Face of the Uninsured: a Detailed Description of Illinois' Uninsured*, is based on an analysis of 2005 health insurance status collected by the Census Bureau in the 2006 Current Population Survey (CPS) March Supplement and released in August 2006. On March 23, 2007, the Census Bureau issued revised figures for 2004 and 2005, which change the previously published data, including the data used in this report. A press release from the Census Bureau explaining the revision is available at: http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/health_care_insurance/009789.html.

The revisions were made by the Census Bureau as part of an ongoing effort to improve the quality of their data. The Census Bureau discovered that they had not previously incorporated insurance status into the data for some individuals for whom survey data were collected. The effect on estimates of the number of uninsured was mitigated by the fact that the Census Bureau imputed, or estimated, insurance status for these individuals, with results that accurately matched actual survey responses for many individuals. However, there were some individuals for whom imputed results differed from actual responses, so the number of uninsured was slightly overestimated in previously published data.

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