



For Immediate Release
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Study Finds That 58% of Uninsured Illinoisans are Employed Lagging Economy Expected to Intensify the Problem

Chicago – April 30, 2008 - According to a new study released today by the Gilead Outreach and Referral Center, the number of employed persons in Illinois who are uninsured has reached more than one million and now accounts for 58 percent of the state's total uninsured population, which also rose to 1.75 million in 2006 (the most recent data available).

"The report is disconcerting. While the state has been able to make some inroads in expanding health care coverage, the report shows clearly that Illinois' working families are among the hardest hit even in good economic times," said Steve Derks, CEO of American Cancer Society and President of the Board of Trustees for the Gilead Outreach and Referral Center. "Unfortunately, the sluggish economy will likely lead to even higher numbers of uninsured and more difficulties for working families in Illinois."

Recent economic reports suggest that the economy is currently in or on the brink of a recession, which will likely lead to a growing number of uninsured. In addition, studies continue to show that increasing numbers of employers are unable to afford rising health care coverage costs, forcing them to reduce or eliminate health care benefits or pass a larger portion of the cost on to their employees. In many instances, employees decline coverage due to affordability of their portion.

The study also found that nearly one million Illinois families have at least one uninsured person living within their households. These and other trends are evident in the Gilead Center's 2007 report, ***The Face of the Uninsured: A Detailed Description of Illinois' Uninsured***, which provides real life examples that represent the voices of the uninsured. The 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.

Other key findings from the Gilead report include:

- There are almost 750,000 uninsured, low-income Illinois adults (aged 19-64) that do not qualify for public health insurance coverage.
- Nearly a quarter (24 percent) of Illinois' young adult population (aged 19-29) is uninsured.
- Illinois' recent efforts to expand health coverage for children between the ages of 0-18 have had some positive impact; the number of uninsured children, ages 0-18, has dropped from 384,970 in 2004 to 323,197 in 2006.

The Voice of the Uninsured: A Detailed Description of Illinois' Uninsured was commissioned by the Gilead Outreach and Referral Center, a non-profit non-partisan organization that connects the uninsured with health care benefits and services for which they are eligible and conducted by faculty at the University of Illinois at Chicago School of Public Health. The full report can be viewed online at www.gileadcenter.org.

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