

Health Care: Are you better off today than you were four years ago?

State Fact Sheets

Health care has emerged as one of the top concerns of Americans in recent years, according to polls and public opinion surveys. To understand what forces are driving this change, Families USA posed a variation of a question raised by Ronald Reagan more than two decades ago: When it comes to health care, are we better off today than we were four years ago? The results of our analysis show that the answer is a clear *no*.

We found that the premiums paid by workers rose nearly three times faster than the average U.S. earnings from 2000 to 2004: Workers' health premium costs grew by 35.9 percent, while the average earnings over the same period rose by only 12.4 percent. Consequently, health insurance premiums have consumed a growing share of earnings over the past four years. We also found that many more people are now uninsured: Approximately 85.2 million people were uninsured at some time during the 2003-2004 period—an increase of 12.7 million from 1999-2000 (when that number stood at 72.5 million).

These grim findings explain why health care costs and coverage have become a top-priority concern for America's families over the past four years.



Health Care: Are you better off today than you were four years ago? Read the [report](#) (PDF file) or the [press release](#).



Seguros médicos: ¿Estamos mejor protegidos que hace cuatro años? Lea el [informe en español](#) (archivo PDF) o el [comunicado de prensa](#).

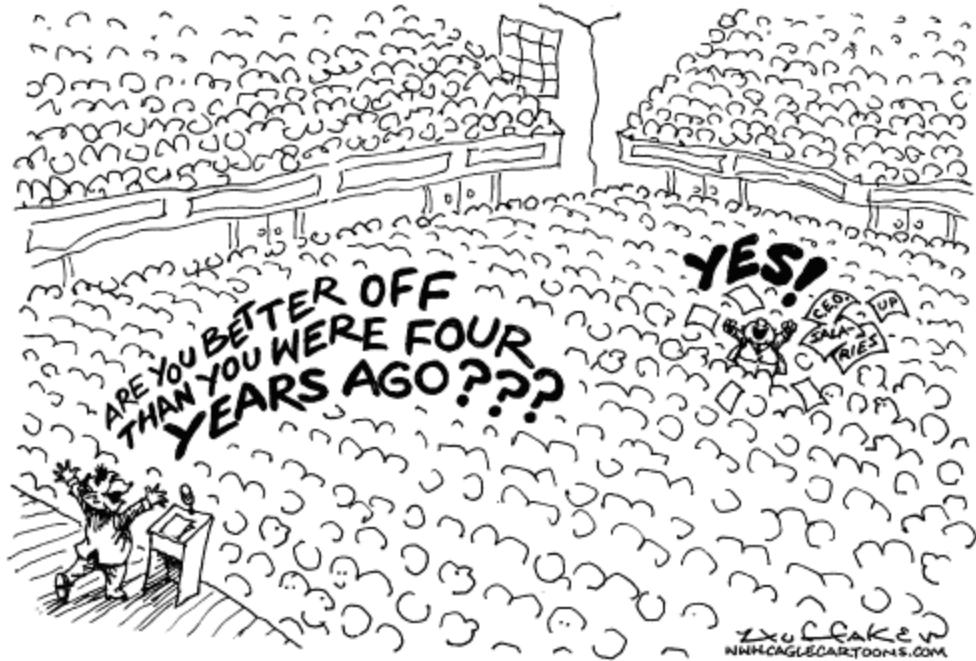


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NEW REPORT SHOWS HEALTH CARE IS FAR LESS AFFORDABLE THAN IT WAS FOUR YEARS AGO

In 35 States, Workers' Health Care Premiums Rose at Least Three Times Faster Than Their Earnings, Despite Reductions in Coverage

Washington, D.C. – Despite fewer health benefits for working families, health insurance premiums rose much faster than earnings over the last four years, according to a report released today by Families USA, the national nonprofit and nonpartisan organization for health care consumers.

In the following 35 states, according to the report, average premium costs for workers rose *at least* three times faster than average earnings from 2000 to 2004: Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Vermont, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming. [See attached chart #1.]

Nationally, workers' premium costs rose, on average, by 35.9 percent, while their average earnings over the same period rose by only 12.4 percent. These comparatively large premium increases occurred despite erosions in health care coverage, with employer-provided insurance packages covering fewer health services and workers paying more in deductibles and copayments.

“Working families were squeezed by runaway health care costs over the past four years,” said Ron Pollack, Executive Director of Families USA. “As a result, workers are paying much more in premiums but are receiving less health coverage; wages are being depressed; and millions of people have lost health coverage entirely.”

Family health premiums paid by employers and workers rose from \$7,028 in 2000 to \$9,320 in 2004. The average amount paid by workers for this coverage rose from \$1,433 to \$1,947 during that period—an increase of 35.9 percent.

And, the number of Americans who had total health costs that consumed more than one-quarter of their earnings rose from 11.6 million in 2000 to 14.3 million in 2004—an increase of almost 23 percent. The overwhelming majority of these people (10.7 million) had health insurance.

“Health care costs and coverage for America’s working families have gotten considerably worse over the past four years,” said Pollack. “It is high time that these growing problems receive priority attention and national leadership.”

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The Families USA report also found that many more people are now uninsured. Approximately 85.2 million people were uninsured at some time during the 2003-2004 period, an increase of 12.7 million from 1999-2000, when the number of uninsured stood at 72.5 million. **[For state-by-state numbers, see attached chart #2.]**

In 2003-2004, one out of every three Americans under 65 years of age went without health insurance for some period of time. Over half of these people were uninsured for *at least* nine months.

“The number of people who were uninsured at some point in 2003-2004 exceeds the combined population of 32 states and the District of Columbia,” said Pollack. “This is an epidemic that requires immediate attention.”

The report was produced with data compiled and analyzed by The Lewin Group from federal government sources, including the Census Bureau, the Department of Labor, and the Department of Health and Human Services. The analysis allowed Families USA to compare data on health costs and coverage in 2000 with projections for 2004.

For a copy of the report, please visit our Web site at www.familiesusa.org.

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Families USA is the national organization for health care consumers. It is nonprofit and nonpartisan and advocates for high-quality health care for all Americans.

Chart #1
Rate of Increase, Worker Share of Premiums and Average Worker Earnings, by State, 2000 to 2004

State	2000 - 2004		Premium Increases as Multiple of Earnings Growth
	Change In Average Premium Paid by Worker ¹	Change in Average Earnings per Worker ²	
Alabama	36.5%	11.4%	3.2
Alaska	56.7%	9.1%	6.2
Arizona	44.2%	11.0%	4.0
Arkansas	39.1%	12.1%	3.2
California	15.6%	14.3%	1.1
Colorado	44.7%	13.2%	3.4
Connecticut	55.8%	14.4%	3.9
Delaware	48.3%	10.3%	4.7
District of Columbia	51.5%	17.9%	2.9
Florida	35.0%	11.2%	3.1
Georgia	39.6%	13.0%	3.0
Hawaii	21.6%	13.6%	1.6
Idaho	36.7%	9.5%	3.9
Illinois	34.9%	13.0%	2.7
Indiana	39.9%	11.9%	3.4
Iowa	40.7%	10.6%	3.8
Kansas	44.7%	12.5%	3.6
Kentucky	42.3%	11.2%	3.8
Louisiana	23.2%	11.7%	2.0
Maine	53.9%	12.5%	4.3
Maryland	36.6%	15.0%	2.4
Massachusetts	49.8%	14.1%	3.5
Michigan	42.1%	10.0%	4.2
Minnesota	50.0%	14.2%	3.5
Mississippi	50.3%	9.4%	5.4
Missouri	23.4%	12.1%	1.9
Montana	44.0%	11.9%	3.7
Nebraska	43.0%	13.5%	3.2
Nevada	46.4%	14.4%	3.2
New Hampshire	45.6%	14.6%	3.1
New Jersey	42.9%	9.7%	4.4
New Mexico	46.0%	11.2%	4.1
New York	39.7%	13.1%	3.0
North Carolina	37.1%	12.5%	3.0
North Dakota	35.5%	12.8%	2.8
Ohio	34.1%	12.2%	2.8
Oklahoma	30.8%	11.7%	2.6
Oregon	31.9%	11.3%	2.8
Pennsylvania	27.4%	11.3%	2.4
Rhode Island	43.4%	15.5%	2.8
South Carolina	54.5%	11.9%	4.6
South Dakota	49.9%	9.2%	5.4
Tennessee	31.1%	12.1%	2.6
Texas	38.5%	11.2%	3.4
Utah	66.3%	13.2%	5.0
Vermont	57.2%	14.9%	3.9
Virginia	32.8%	13.4%	2.4
Washington	20.4%	10.8%	1.9
West Virginia	38.5%	12.2%	3.2
Wisconsin	49.3%	12.2%	4.0
Wyoming	48.1%	14.4%	3.3
U.S. Average	35.9%	12.4%	2.9

Source: Estimates prepared by The Lewin Group for Families USA (see report's Methodology for details).

¹ See Table A in Appendix. ² See Table B in Appendix.

Chart #2
Uninsured People under Age 65, by State

State	1999 – 2000		2003-2004	
	Total Number	Percent of Non-Elderly Population	Total Number	Percent of Non-Elderly Population
Alabama	1,193,000	30.7%	1,166,000	31.1%
Alaska	204,000	33.7%	203,000	35.4%
Arizona	1,487,000	33.5%	1,757,000	35.7%
Arkansas	708,000	31.2%	844,000	36.1%
California	11,021,000	35.2%	12,152,000	38.0%
Colorado	1,038,000	27.1%	1,419,000	33.9%
Connecticut	582,000	20.7%	848,000	29.0%
Delaware	180,000	25.9%	187,000	26.6%
District of Columbia	150,000	32.9%	185,000	34.0%
Florida	4,344,000	33.8%	4,951,000	34.6%
Georgia	2,149,000	30.1%	2,579,000	31.8%
Hawaii	280,000	27.5%	342,000	31.4%
Idaho	344,000	30.6%	393,000	33.6%
Illinois	3,188,000	29.0%	3,597,000	32.6%
Indiana	1,338,000	26.5%	1,634,000	29.2%
Iowa	553,000	22.4%	668,000	26.2%
Kansas	586,000	26.1%	650,000	26.9%
Kentucky	969,000	27.5%	1,073,000	30.6%
Louisiana	1,409,000	37.6%	1,502,000	37.2%
Maine	272,000	24.7%	301,000	28.7%
Maryland	1,067,000	23.6%	1,411,000	27.8%
Massachusetts	1,356,000	24.6%	1,535,000	27.1%
Michigan	2,148,000	24.3%	2,734,000	31.1%
Minnesota	952,000	21.8%	1,070,000	23.1%
Mississippi	763,000	31.2%	859,000	34.3%
Missouri	1,184,000	24.2%	1,317,000	26.9%
Montana	262,000	34.4%	251,000	32.1%
Nebraska	355,000	24.3%	405,000	26.8%
Nevada	588,000	33.0%	718,000	36.9%
New Hampshire	223,000	20.4%	255,000	22.6%
New Jersey	1,972,000	27.1%	2,307,000	30.3%
New Mexico	655,000	41.5%	715,000	44.7%
New York	5,111,000	31.4%	6,155,000	35.6%
North Carolina	1,921,000	28.4%	2,538,000	34.0%
North Dakota	141,000	26.7%	147,000	26.4%
Ohio	2,629,000	26.0%	2,862,000	29.5%
Oklahoma	994,000	34.7%	1,173,000	37.3%
Oregon	881,000	29.2%	1,028,000	32.4%
Pennsylvania	2,287,000	22.0%	2,820,000	27.4%
Rhode Island	163,000	20.0%	269,000	27.1%
South Carolina	917,000	27.6%	1,157,000	32.4%
South Dakota	152,000	25.4%	189,000	27.3%
Tennessee	1,300,000	26.1%	1,496,000	29.3%
Texas	7,123,000	38.1%	9,219,000	46.4%
Utah	576,000	28.1%	643,000	29.5%
Vermont	139,000	25.0%	133,000	24.9%
Virginia	1,609,000	25.9%	1,862,000	29.2%
Washington	1,464,000	27.7%	1,630,000	29.9%
West Virginia	463,000	30.9%	465,000	32.3%
Wisconsin	1,017,000	21.3%	1,262,000	25.9%
Wyoming	125,000	29.0%	139,000	32.5%
U.S. Total*	72,533,000	29.6%	85,216,000	33.3%

Source: Estimates prepared by The Lewin Group for Families USA (see report's Methodology for details).

* Numbers do not add due to rounding.