

Health

Children and Nonelderly Adults with No Usual Source of Health Care



People who lack a regular source of health care may not receive services when they need them, leading to missed diagnoses,

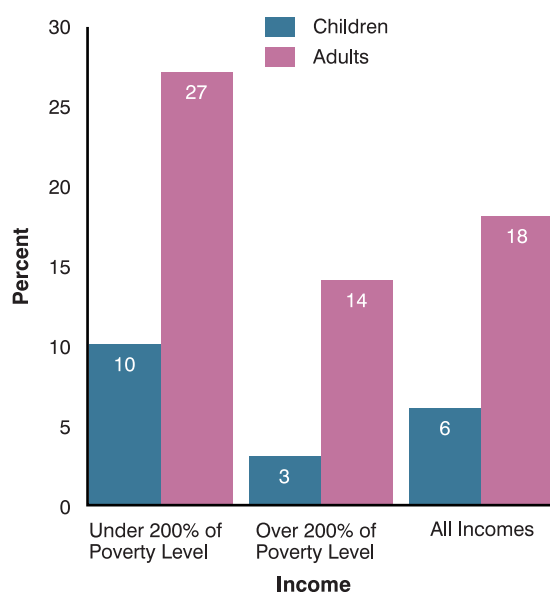
untreated conditions, and adverse health outcomes. Maintaining regular

contact with a health services provider can be difficult for low-income people, who are less likely to have health insurance coverage. People without insurance often rely on hospital emergency rooms, which can raise overall costs and lessen continuity of care.

To determine the percentage of children and nonelderly adults with no usual source of health care, adults were asked whether they and their children had a regular place or provider of care and where they received care. Those who reported that they had no regular provider or that they went to a hospital emergency room when they needed health services were defined as having no usual source of care. This was in contrast to individuals who reported that they received care at a doctor's office, a health maintenance organization (HMO), or a clinic.

Nationally, adults were much more likely than children to have no usual source of care: 18 percent versus 6 percent, a statistically significant difference. This pattern held regardless of family income. However, there were large differences among adults and children across income groups. Adults in families with low incomes (under 200 percent of the federal poverty level) were almost twice as likely to lack a usual source of care as adults in higher-income families—27 percent compared to 14 percent. The disparity across income groups was even greater for children, with 10 percent of those in low-income families having no usual source of care versus 3 percent of those in higher-income families. Both of these differences are statistically significant.

Children and Nonelderly Adults with No Usual Source of Health Care, by Income, 1997



Source: Urban Institute

Among the 13 states surveyed, there was little variation in the percentage of higher-income children who lacked a usual source of care. Only three states (Massachusetts, Minnesota, and Wisconsin) were lower than the national average of 3 percent, and no state was higher. In contrast, the percentage of children in low-income families with no usual source of care was above the national average of 10 percent in four states (Alabama, California, Florida, and Texas), with low-income children in Texas almost twice as likely as low-income children nationally to lack a usual source of care.



Niall Brennan

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Assessing the New Federalism

An Urban Institute Program to Assess Changing Social Policies

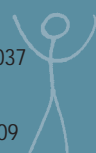


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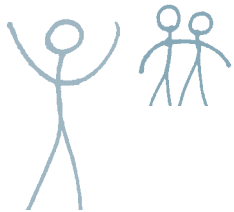
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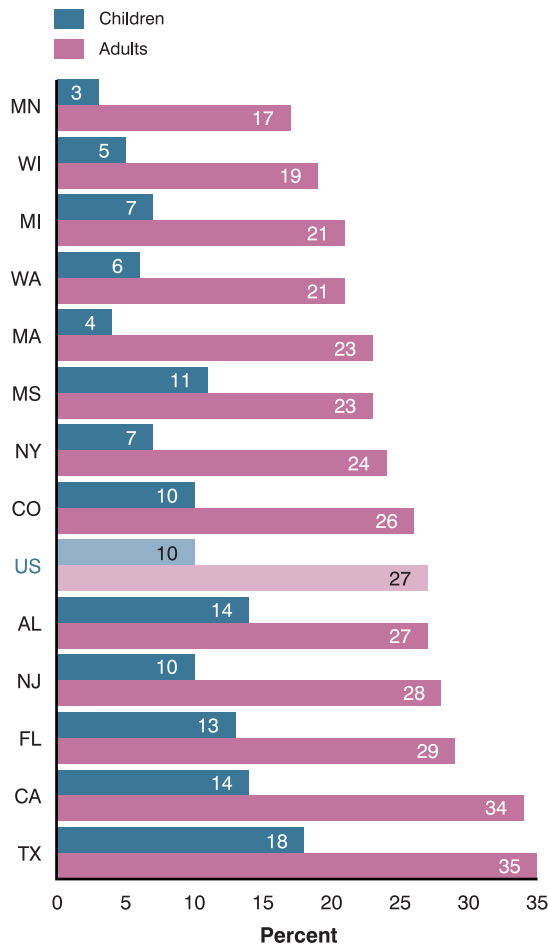


This *Snapshot* presents findings from the National Survey of America's Families (NSAF), a 1997 survey of 44,461 households with and without telephones that are representative of the nation as a whole and of 13 states. As in all surveys, the data are subject to sampling variability and other sources of error.

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Low-Income Children and Nonelderly Adults with No Usual Source of Health Care, by State, 1997



Source: Urban Institute

The percentage of low-income adults with no usual source of care also varied considerably by state. In California and Texas, more than one-third had no usual source of care, a higher proportion than the national average. The percentage of low-income adults with no usual source of care was below the national average of 27 percent in Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Washington, and Wisconsin.

Children (%) and Nonelderly Adults (%) with No Usual Source of Health Care, 1997

Age	AL	CA	CO	FL	MA	MI	MN	MS	NJ	NY	TX	WA	WI	US
Under 200% of poverty level														
Under 18	14.2	14.4	10.3	13.4	3.9	6.8	3.2	11.2	9.9	7.1	18.2	6.1	5.5	9.7
18-64	27.2	33.7	25.8	29.1	23.3	21.3	16.9	23.0	27.7	24.5	34.8	20.8	18.6	26.6
Over 200% of poverty level														
Under 18	4.3	3.8	3.1	3.6	1.9	3.2	1.8	3.9	3.0	2.9	4.6	2.5	1.7	3.3
18-64	13.6	15.3	12.7	17.8	11.3	12.1	8.5	15.3	14.2	13.9	16.7	10.9	8.4	13.8
All incomes														
Under 18	9.1	9.1	5.6	8.3	2.5	4.4	2.2	8.1	5.0	4.8	11.3	3.8	2.9	6.0
18-64	18.4	21.7	16.1	21.7	13.7	14.3	10.3	18.4	16.8	17.0	23.0	13.6	10.7	17.6

Figures in color represent statistically significant differences from the national average at the .05 confidence level. Figures in black are not statistically significantly different from the national average. All figures in text, charts, and table are rounded.

Source: Urban Institute