

# Healthcare Facts



## Falling Access to Care

- Uninsured, national — 46.8 million (15.9% of the population), 2005, up from 45.3 million in 2004. Hispanics highest rate of uninsured – 32.7%; African-Americans, 19.6%; Asians, 17.9%; whites, 15%; children, 11.2%; middle-income (\$50k–\$75k), 14.1%; work full-time, 17.7% (*U.S. Census Bureau*). 82 million, or one in three non-elderly Americans, went without health insurance during 2003–2004 (*Washington Post*, Dec. 13, 2006).
- Lack of health insurance causes 18,000 unnecessary deaths every year (*Institute of Medicine*, January 14, 2004), the equivalent of six times the number who died in 9/11. (*Louisville Courier-Journal*, Jan. 30, 2006)
- Among Americans with colorectal cancer, those without insurance are 70% more likely to die within three years than those with insurance (*Paul Krugman, Robin Wells, New York Review of Books*, March 23, 2006) Uninsured lung cancer patients are less likely to receive surgery, chemotherapy, or radiation treatment; heart attack victims are less likely to receive angioplasty; people without pneumonia are less likely to receive X-rays or consultations (*Malcolm Gladwell, New Yorker*, Aug. 29, 2005).
- Uninsured patients receive less preventive care, are diagnosed at more advanced disease stages, and receive less therapeutic care (drugs and surgical interventions). Having insurance would reduce mortality rates for the uninsured by 10%-15%. Better health would improve annual earnings and educational attainment (*Kaiser Family Foundation report*, May, 2004).
- The number of Americans covered by Medicaid rose by eight million between 2000 and 2004, nearly matching the number of people covered by Medicare, 37.5 million to 39.7 million, reflecting how much higher the number of uninsured would be without Medicaid (*Krugman, Wells*).
- Underinsured, national — 17.1 million people under 65 in 2003 (*JAMA*, Dec. 13, 2006). “Underinsured” person defined as someone with health expenses exceeding 10% of his or her income. Among the underinsured, 38% did not fill prescriptions due to cost, 32% went without seeing a doctor when needed, 30% avoided medical tests, treatment or follow-up care. 18% declined care from specialists. 46% reported being contacted by a collection agency about unpaid medical bills. 35% reported changing their lifestyle to cover medical expenses (*Health Affairs*, June 14, 2005).
- 929 poor counties (more than half of all poor counties) lacked a health center, survey by the National Association of Community Health centers and George Washington University. In 2004, 90% of qualified applications for new centers to gain funding were denied. (*National Association of Community Health Centers*, March 2005).