CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES • OFFICE OF WOMEN'S HEALTH

CWHS

Data Points

RESULTS FROM THE CALIFORNIA WOMEN'S HEALTH SURVEY

HEALTH INSURANCE STATUS OF NON-ELDERLY ADULT WOMEN AGES 18 - 64 WITH SELECTED SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS, CALIFORNIA, 2000

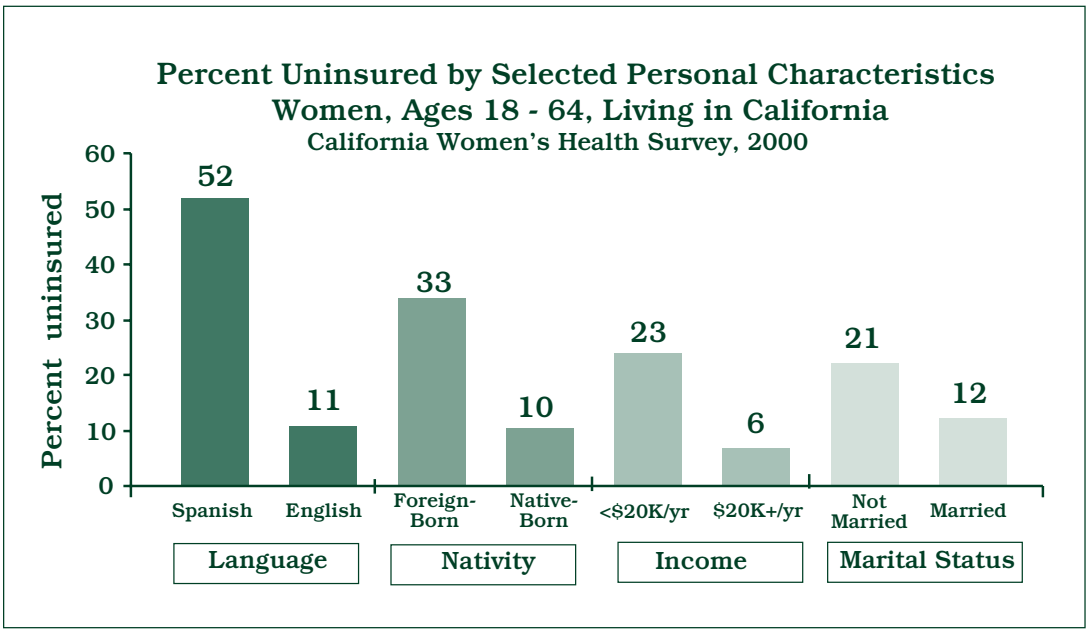
Maternal and Child Health Branch, California Department of Health Services

Health insurance status is a critical determinant of access to health care services. Women who lack health insurance or who have gaps in insurance coverage may not receive needed health and medical care services, including preventive medical services, for chronic conditions and/or episodic illnesses. It is incumbent upon medical and public health professionals to develop a comprehensive understanding of the populations most likely to be without health insurance. Having such an understanding will facilitate programmatic and policy-oriented efforts designed to reduce the burden associated with lack of insurance in California.

The 2000 California Women's Health Survey (CWHS) gathered from each respondent information about her health insurance status, age, nativity, marital status, educational attainment, employment status, personal income, and race/ethnicity. The purpose of this paper is to augment previous work on health insurance coverage status (*Data Points, Issue 2, Numbers 12 and 13*). In the present study, insurance status by sociodemographic characteristics was determined. At the time of the survey:

- Of the women who completed the CWHS in Spanish, 52% were uninsured vs. 11% of those completing the survey in English.
- Of the foreign-born women who completed the CWHS, 33% were uninsured vs. 10% of native-born women.
- Twenty-three percent of women with personal incomes below $20,000 per year were uninsured vs. 6% of those with higher incomes.
- One in five (21%) unmarried women was uninsured vs. one in eight (12%) married women.

Attempts to increase the proportion of California women who have health insurance will need to recognize the contributions marital status and personal income have in influencing one's insurance status. Further, such efforts will need to target Hispanic women with a preference for oral communication in Spanish and women born outside of the United States.



Public Health Message:

Prudent public health efforts are needed not only to identify those California women who lack health insurance coverage but also to enable them to acquire appropriate coverage. In doing so, the burden of uninsuredness on the State of California will be reduced.

Issue 3, Summer 2002, Num. 24