



## National Health Interview Survey

### About NCHS

The CDC's National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) is the nation's principal health statistics agency, providing data to identify and address health issues. NCHS compiles statistical information to help guide public health and health policy decisions.

Collaborating with other public and private health partners, NCHS employs a variety of data collection mechanisms to obtain accurate information from multiple sources. This process provides a broad perspective to help us understand the population's health, influences on health, and health outcomes.

### National Health Interview Survey

The National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) provides information on the health status of the U.S. civilian non-institutionalized population through confidential interviews conducted in households. The NHIS is the nation's largest in-person household health survey. It provides data for analyzing health trends, health status, access to and utilization of healthcare, health-related behaviors, and risk factors for racial and ethnic populations.

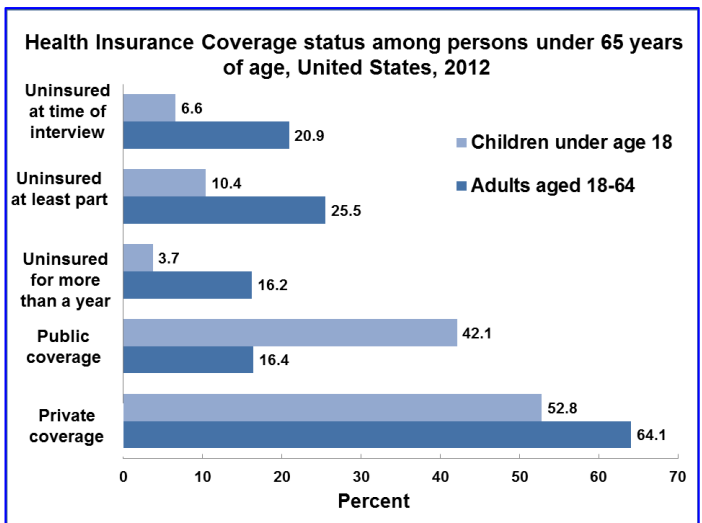
#### Health topics addressed:

- Health Status
- Use of Health Services
- Health Behaviors
- Health Insurance Coverage
- Access to Care
- Measures of Functioning
- Injuries and Poisonings
- Immunizations
- Conditions such as:  
Asthma/Diabetes/Heart/Mental Health/Cancer

### Examples of NHIS Data

Health Insurance data from 2012 show:

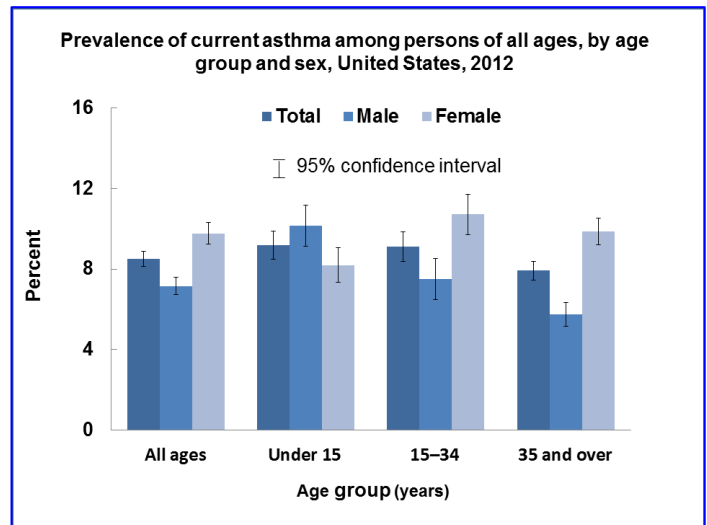
- The percentage of **uninsured persons at the time of interview** was 20.9 percent for persons aged 18-64 years and 6.6 percent for children under age 18.
- A total of 45.5 million persons (14.7 percent) of all ages were **uninsured at the time of the interview**, 57.7 million (18.6 percent) had been **uninsured for at least part of the year** prior to the interview, and 34.1 million (11.1 percent) had been **uninsured for more than a year** at the time of the interview.
- A total of 4.9 million (6.6 percent) of children under age 18 were **uninsured at the time of the interview**.



Source: National Health Interview Survey, 2012

Asthma data from 2012 show:

- **Current asthma** prevalence among persons of all ages was 8.5 percent in 2012.
- For both sexes combined, the prevalence of **current asthma** was lower among persons aged 35 and over compared to those under age 15 and those aged 15-34.
- For persons of all ages, and for persons aged 15-34 and 35 and over, the prevalence of **current asthma** was higher among females than among males. For persons under age 15, the prevalence of current asthma was higher among males than among females.



Source: National Health Interview Survey, 2012

Other NHIS data from 2012 show:

- The percent of persons of all ages with a **usual place to go for medical care** was highest for non-Hispanic whites at 88.1 percent and lowest for Hispanics at 77.2 percent.
- The percent of **current smokers** among adults 18 years and older, was highest for non-Hispanic whites at 20.5 percent and lowest for Hispanics at 11.9 percent.
- The prevalence of **diagnosed diabetes** (based on self-report of physician diagnosis) was higher among non-Hispanic blacks and Hispanics than among non-Hispanic whites.

## Wireless Substitution Data

Twice a year, the NHIS releases selected estimates of telephone coverage based on in-person interviews including whether anyone in the household has a wireless telephone. The inability to reach households with **only wireless telephones** (or with no telephone service) has potential implications for results from health surveys and other research conducted using random-digit-dial telephone surveys. Coverage bias may exist if there are differences between persons with and without landline telephones for the substantive variables of interest.

- Results indicate nearly two of every five American homes (38.2 percent) had only **wireless telephones** during the second half of 2012, an increase of 2.4 percentage points since the first half of 2012. In addition, 6 in 10 of adults 25-29 years of age lived in households with only wireless telephones.
- The **prevalence of having five or more alcoholic drinks** in 1 day during the past year among wireless-only adults (30.3 percent) was substantially higher than the prevalence among adults living in landline households (18.2 percent). Wireless-only adults were also more likely to be **current smokers** (23.2 percent) than were adults living in landline households (14.4 percent).

## Challenges and Future Opportunities

To enhance the usefulness and accessibility of NHIS data by continuous improvements in data quality, relevance and reporting. Major projects include an online system for real-time analysis of NHIS data, a redesigned NHIS sample starting in 2016, and a redesigned NHIS questionnaire starting in 2017.

For further information about NCHS and its programs, visit us at <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs> or call the Office of Planning, Budget and Legislation at 301-458-4100.

Updated July, 2013