

The Foreign-born Component of the Uninsured Population

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This Office of Immigration Statistics Fact Sheet provides information on trends in the population without health insurance coverage by nativity and citizenship status. Data were obtained from the Annual Social and Economic (ASEC) Supplement to the Current Population Survey (CPS) of the U.S. Census Bureau. In the ASEC Supplement, questions regarding health insurance coverage ask respondents if they were covered by specific types of health insurance at any time during the previous year (i.e., “At any time in 2007, were you covered by Medicare?”).¹ Estimates of the uninsured population presented in this report therefore refer to the number of individuals not covered by health insurance during the entire year.

FINDINGS

During 2007, 12.4 million foreign-born residents did not have health insurance coverage (see Figure 1). While the foreign-born population represented 12.5 percent of the total U.S. population, foreign-born individuals accounted for 27.1 percent of the uninsured population (see Figure 2). The foreign-born share of the uninsured population increased from 20.7 percent to 24.5 percent between 1998 and 2000 but remained stable between 2001 and 2007.²

The uninsured rates of the foreign-born population have historically been higher than the rates of the native-born population (see Figure 3). During 2007, for example, 33.2 percent of the foreign-born population was not covered by health insurance compared to 13.7 percent of the native-born population. The uninsured rate for foreign-born citizens (17.6 percent in 2007) was slightly higher than the rate of the native-born population, whereas the uninsured rate for foreign born non-citizens (43.8 percent) was substantially higher than the rate of the native population. Between 2001 and 2007, uninsured rates for natives and foreign-born non-citizens increased while the uninsured rate for foreign-born citizens remained statistically unchanged.

¹ See Appendix D in the Technical Documentation to the Current Population Survey, 2008 Annual Social and Economic Supplement.

² All comparisons are statistically significant at the 95-percent confidence level.

Adjusting the uninsured estimates between the foreign-born and native-born populations for differences in age composition only marginally affected the uninsured rates (see Table 1). The age-standardized uninsured rates of the foreign-born, that is, the rates that would be expected if the foreign-born population had the same age structure as the native population, were higher than the uninsured rate of the native population from 1993 to 2007 (see Table 1).

APPENDIX

Beginning in the 2000 ASEC Supplement, survey respondents who answered that they were not covered by each type of health insurance coverage were asked to confirm that they were not covered by *any* type of health insurance during the year. Nearly 8 percent of individuals who initially reported not being covered by any type of insurance subsequently answered that they were covered at some time during the year.³

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit the Office of Immigration Statistics web page at <http://www.dhs.gov/immigrationstatistics>.

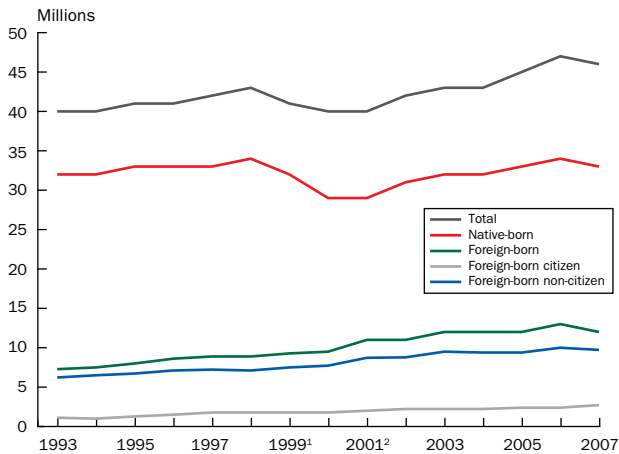
³ See Nelson, Charles T. and Robert J. Mills, 2001. The March CPS Health Insurance Verification Question and its Effect on Estimates of the Uninsured, U.S. Census Bureau.



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Figure 1.
Persons Without Health Insurance Coverage by Nativity and Citizenship Status: 1993 to 2007

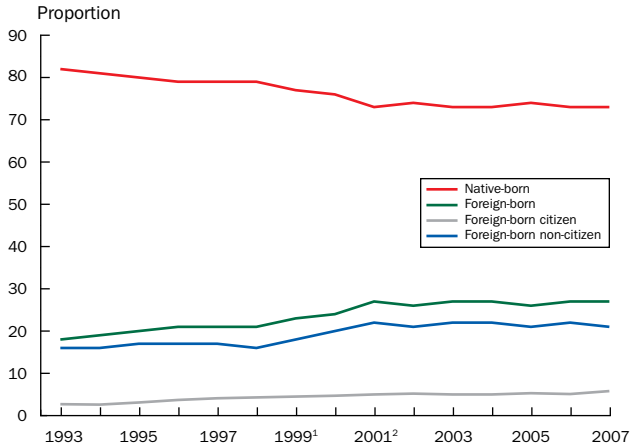


¹ These estimates reflect the results of follow-up verification questions that were asked of people who responded "no" to all questions about specific types of health insurance coverage in order to verify whether they were actually uninsured.

² Implementation of Census 2000-based population controls occurred for the 2002 ASEC, which collected data for 2001.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 1994 to 2008 Annual Social and Economic Supplements.

Figure 2.
Distribution of Persons Without Health Insurance Coverage by Nativity and Citizenship Status: 1993 to 2007

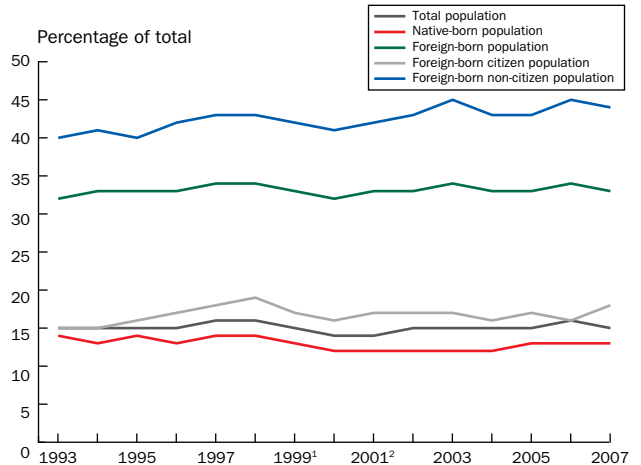


¹ These estimates reflect the results of follow-up verification questions that were asked of people who responded "no" to all questions about specific types of health insurance coverage in order to verify whether they were actually uninsured.

² Implementation of Census 2000-based population controls occurred for the 2002 ASEC, which collected data for 2001.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 1994 to 2008 Annual Social and Economic Supplements.

Figure 3.
Percentage of Population Group Without Health Insurance Coverage: 1993 to 2007



¹ These estimates reflect the results of follow-up verification questions that were asked of people who responded "no" to all questions about specific types of health insurance coverage in order to verify whether they were actually uninsured.

² Implementation of Census 2000-based population controls occurred for the 2002 ASEC, which collected data for 2001.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 1994 to 2008 Annual Social and Economic Supplements.

Table 1.
Percent of Native-born and Foreign-born Population Without Health Insurance Coverage

Year	Native	Foreign-born	
	Actual	Actual	Standardized
2007	12.7	33.2	31.5
2006	13.2	33.8	31.8
2005	12.8	33.0	32.1
2004	12.5	32.8	31.0
2003	12.5	34.1	32.7
2002	12.3	32.9	31.8
2001	11.7	32.9	31.2
2000	11.8	31.6	31.2
1999	12.9	32.8	32.5
1998	13.9	33.7	34.3
1997	13.8	33.9	33.8
1996	13.5	33.3	33.4
1995	13.6	32.5	31.5
1994	13.5	32.8	33.2
1993	13.7	32.4	32.7

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 1994 to 2008 Annual Social and Economic Supplements.