

Boomers hit hardest by 'Great Recession'

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A new study shows what many middle-aged Californians privately suspect: They are the first to lose their jobs and the health benefits that come with those jobs when hard times hit.

The analysis by the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research looked at California data on the uninsured between 2007 and 2009 and found that of the approximately 700,000 Californians to lose health insurance during this time, the greatest increase was among residents between the ages of 45 and 64.

"Whether because mid-career workers are viewed as too expensive or because there is a deeper bias against [older workers](#), the data suggests the axe is first to fall on the [baby boom generation](#)," said Shana Alex Lavarreda, lead author of the study and the center's director of health insurance studies. "This might open the door for policymakers to question the fairness of hiring and firing in the next economic cycle."

The findings are part of a larger study that looks at the staggering job losses during the "Great Recession" and their impact on individual California counties.

Between 2007 and 2009, the number of people in the state without health insurance surged by more than 10 percent, to 7.1 million, the researchers found. During that same period, the jobless rate in the state more than doubled, from 5.5 percent to 12.3 percent, causing a steep drop in the number of people receiving health insurance through their employer.

Using data from the California Health Interview Survey (CHIS), the study's authors examined economic variations by county, creating a "recession index" that takes into account increases in unemployment and decreases in [household income](#). They then divided the state's 58 counties into four categories that gauge the impact of the recession: low, moderate, medium and high.

This index found at least one silver lining in the economic clouds: The "high impact" counties, such as Imperial, Merced and San Joaquin, saw a modest 1 percent decline in the number of uninsured people (ages 0

Provided by University of California, Los Angeles

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