

Young U.S. adults may lack health coverage

24 May 2006

Young adults are reportedly the fastest growing group of uninsured people in the United States, with 13.7 million lacking health insurance coverage.

That number represents an increase of 2.5 million from 2000, according to a Commonwealth Fund report that says adults between the ages of 19 and 29 represent the largest segment of the U.S. population without health insurance. They are uninsured at twice the rate of adults ages 30 to 64.

Although young adults comprise 17 percent of the under-65 population, they account for 30 percent of the uninsured non-elderly population, the New York City-based organization reported. Researchers said the instability of coverage puts younger adults at risk, with 57 percent reporting going without needed healthcare because of cost.

"There are both health and financial consequences when young adults who are just starting out in the workforce or entering college lose their health insurance," said Commonwealth Fund Senior Program Officer Sara Collins, lead author of the study. "Policy changes such as increasing the age of eligibility for public programs and continued parental coverage would stabilize insurance among young adults and ease their transition to adulthood."

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