Monitoring health care access and utilization following implementation of the Affordable Care Act using the National Health Interview Survey

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Outline

- Using NHIS to monitor Affordable Care Act (ACA):
  - Existing questions provide baseline and trend data
  - New questions address targeted issues
  - Larger sample allows for more state-level estimates

- Highlighted topics
  - Financial burden of medical care
  - Coverage for young adults aged 19-25
  - Emergency room use
  - State-level estimates of insurance coverage
FINANCIAL BURDEN OF MEDICAL CARE
Financial Burden of Medical Care

New questions added to NHIS:

- Problems paying medical bills in past 12 months
- Currently have medical bills that are being paid over time
- Currently have medical bills that they are unable to pay at all
- Any financial burden of medical care (summary)

- Problems paying medical bills in the past 12 months: 20.0%
- Currently have medical bills paid over time: 26.2%
- Currently have medical bills unable to pay at all: 10.5%
- Any financial burden of medical care: 32.4%

Percentages of persons in families with any financial burden of medical care, by age group: U.S., Jan-Jun 2011

Financial Burden of Medical Care

Future research:
- Associations with use of health care services, prescription drug costs
- Unmet needs due to cost
- Trends
HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR ADULTS AGED 19-25
Health Insurance Coverage for Adults Aged 19-25

Using existing NHIS questions:
- Insurance coverage at time of interview, by age
- Access and utilization:
  - Usual place for health care, doctor’s visit in past 12 months, emergency room use
Percentage of adults aged 19-25 with health insurance, by coverage type, and percentage uninsured at time of interview: U.S., 2009-2011

Percentages of adults aged 19-25 with selected access measures, by insurance coverage status: U.S., Jan-Sep 2011

- **Has usual place for health care:**
  - Uninsured: 38.4%
  - Private insurance: 83.1%
  - Public coverage: 84.7%

- **Doctor visit in past 12 months:**
  - Uninsured: 48.1%
  - Private insurance: 77.9%
  - Public coverage: 83.3%

- **Emergency room visit in past 12 months:**
  - Uninsured: 25.1%
  - Private insurance: 18.3%
  - Public coverage: 35.9%

Health Insurance Coverage for Adults Aged 19-25

Future research:

- Obtain more detail on insured young adults:
  - Source of coverage (policyholder)
  - Employment
  - Previous coverage / gaps in coverage
REASONS FOR EMERGENCY ROOM USE
Reasons for Emergency Room Use

Using existing and new questions:

- Number of ER visits in the past 12 months
- Hospital admission for last ER visit
- *If not admitted*, reason for last ER visit
  - Can select more than one

**Adults aged 18-64:**

- 20% visited ER
- 73% not admitted
### Percentage with reason for last ER visit, among adults aged 18–64 whose last visit in past 12 months did not result in hospital admission: U.S., Jan–Jun 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seriousness of medical problem</td>
<td>66.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only hospital could help</td>
<td>54.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem too serious for doctor's office</td>
<td>42.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health provider said to go</td>
<td>20.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrived by ambulance</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of access to other providers</td>
<td>79.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor's office not open</td>
<td>48.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No other place to go</td>
<td>46.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency room is closest provider</td>
<td>45.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most care is at emergency room</td>
<td>17.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentage with reason for last ER visit, among adults aged 18–64 whose last visit in past 12 months did not result in hospital admission, by insurance coverage status: U.S., Jan–Jun 2011

- **No other place to go**:
  - Uninsured: 61.6%
  - Private insurance: 38.9%
  - Public coverage: 48.5%

- **Doctor's office or clinic was not open**:
  - Uninsured: 30.9%
  - Private insurance: 49.9%
  - Public coverage: 59.7%

- **Only hospital could help**:
  - Uninsured: 51.8%
  - Private insurance: 55.6%
  - Public coverage: 53.4%

Reasons for Emergency Room Use

Future research:

- Reasons for ER visits among children, older adults
- Timing of use (nights / weekends)
- State-level estimates of ER use
STATE-LEVEL HEALTH INSURANCE ESTIMATES
State-Level Health Insurance Estimates

Using existing NHIS questions:

- Insurance coverage at time of interview, by state of residence and age
Percentage of persons aged 18-64 who were uninsured at the time of interview, by state: U.S., 2011

State-Level Health Insurance Estimates

Future research:

- Covariates for state-level health insurance estimation
- Additional topics for state-level estimation
Conclusions

- NHIS data can be used to monitor outcomes related to ACA provisions and important health correlates
- Useful for national, subgroup, state estimates
- Can establish baselines and indicate trends
For more information please contact National Center for Health Statistics

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