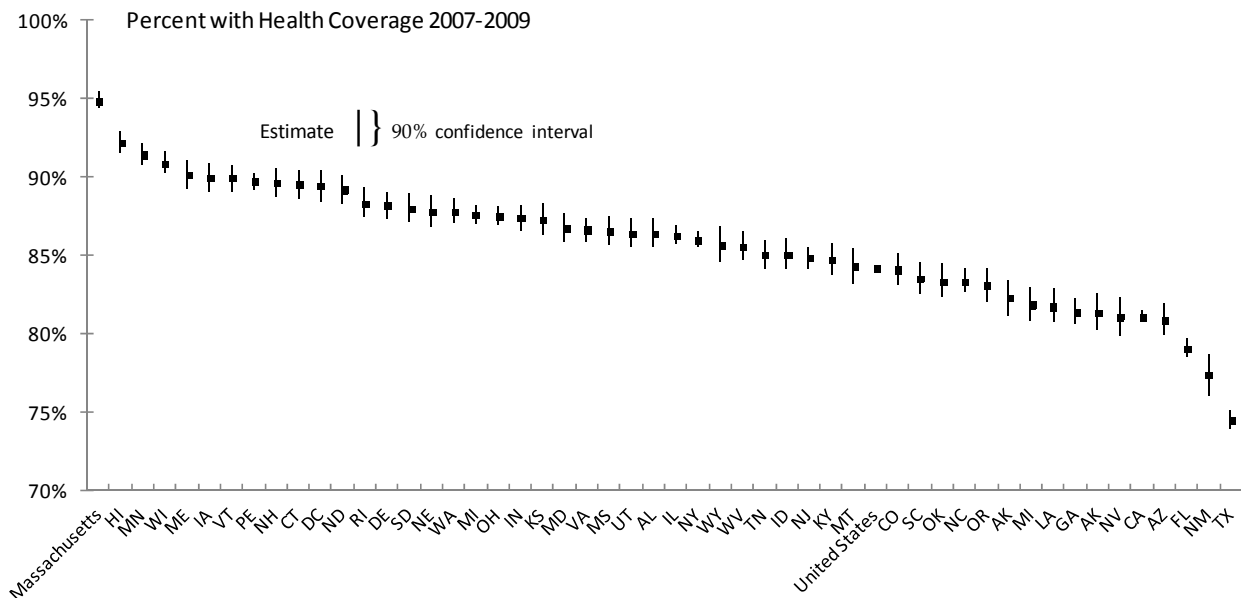


## Massachusetts Still a Leader in Health Coverage

Thanks to the apparent success of Massachusetts' health reform, Census Bureau estimates released today suggest that Massachusetts health care coverage still leads the nation. Nationally, due to the recession, health care coverage is declining (see below.) (The Census Bureau recommends caution in citing these data for state-level analyses, and notes that these data can only be used to examine state-level trends and differences looking at multi-year averages. Today's data are primarily useful for examining estimates of the insured and uninsured population at the national level. Later in the month, the Census Bureau will release additional numbers that will offer more detailed state-level information that will allow for more accurate analyses of Massachusetts health care coverage.)

Using a multi-year average, the Census data estimate that in the 2007-2009 period, Massachusetts had a health insurance coverage rate of 94.9 percent – more than any other state in the nation. The closest state to Massachusetts was Hawaii, with health insurance coverage of 92.2 percent. Texas, on the other hand, covered only 74.5 percent of its population during the 2007-2009 period.

### Massachusetts is First in the Nation in Health Care Coverage



In 2009, the Census Bureau estimates that 50.7 million people went without health insurance in the United States. This percentage – 16.7 percent – is a statistically significant increase from the 2008 estimate of 46.3 million persons. Nationally, the percentage of people who received their health care coverage from their employer in was 55.8 percent, down from 58.5 percent in 2008. Health insurance coverage from public (government) insurance programs increased to 30.6 percent – up from 29 percent in 2008, an increase of close to 5.8 million people. It is important to remember that these figures reflect the beginning of the recession, so as people lost their jobs, they also lost access to employment-based health insurance.

The Census Bureau data are from the Annual Social and Economic Supplements (ASEC) to the Current Population Survey (CPS). These data are based on a survey of conducted in the spring of the year for which they are reported. In a few weeks, the Census Bureau will release a second set of data -- the American Community Survey (ACS). The ACS data will also include health insurance information, and this is the source the Census Bureau recommends to be used for state-level data.<sup>1</sup> Since this is only the second year the ACS includes health insurance coverage, however, these data will not be useful for analyzing trends over longer periods of time. Census Bureau data are the only reliable sources for comparisons across states, and can be the best source for information about long-term trends. Furthermore, measuring health insurance coverage is particularly tricky. The CPS asks respondents whether they were covered by health insurance at any time during the previous year. "Health insurance" for these purposes includes any type of private or publicly-funded health insurance plan, including health insurance provided by a place of employment, purchased individually, or provided by a government entity. People were counted as "insured" if they indicated that they had any type of coverage during the year. The Census Bureau warns that their methodology tends to under-report the rate of health insurance, i.e., overstate uninsurance.

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<sup>1</sup> See detailed information about Census Bureau data here: <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/hlthins/about/index.html>.