

Running the Numbers

*A Periodic Feature to Inform North Carolina Healthcare Professionals
about Current Topics in Health Statistics*

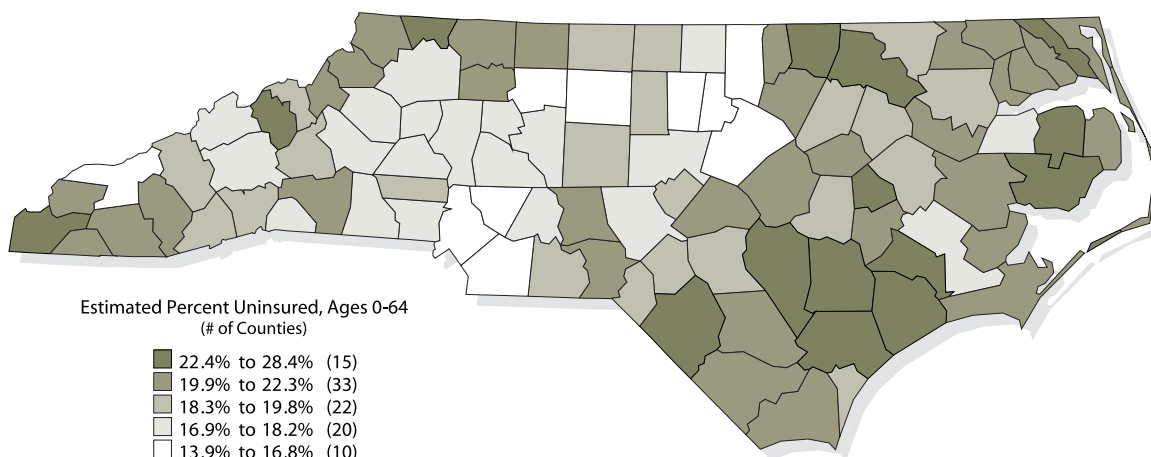
*From the Cecil G. Sheps Center for Health Services Research at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
<http://www.shepscenter.unc.edu>*

The Uninsured in North Carolina, 2004

Estimating the number of uninsured at the county level is not a straightforward process because there are no direct surveys at the local level. Analysts at the Cecil G. Sheps Center for Health Services Research have used data from the United States Census Bureau's Current Population Survey (CPS) March Supplements from 1995-2005 to create county-level estimates of the numbers of persons under 65 years of age who were without insurance for each year starting in 1999. The maps displayed here summarize the results for 2004.

This estimation process identified the factors associated with being uninsured in the state-level sample then extrapolated those data using full population data for each of the counties. Those data indicate that, in general, people who lack health insurance in North Carolina are more likely to be poor, younger, or employed in small business. These factors, among others, were then used to create local estimates. For example, if 20% of males and 10% of females working in service industry jobs in North Carolina are uninsured, then these rates can be applied to county level employment and age-gender characteristics to generate an estimate of the rate of uninsured in a particular county. The complete report, including a listing of counties with numbers and percent of population uninsured, is available at <http://www.shepscenter.unc.edu/>.

Percent of North Carolinians Aged 0-64 without Health Insurance Estimates for 2004



Produced by: Program on Health Economics and Finance, Cecil G. Sheps Center for Health Services Research, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

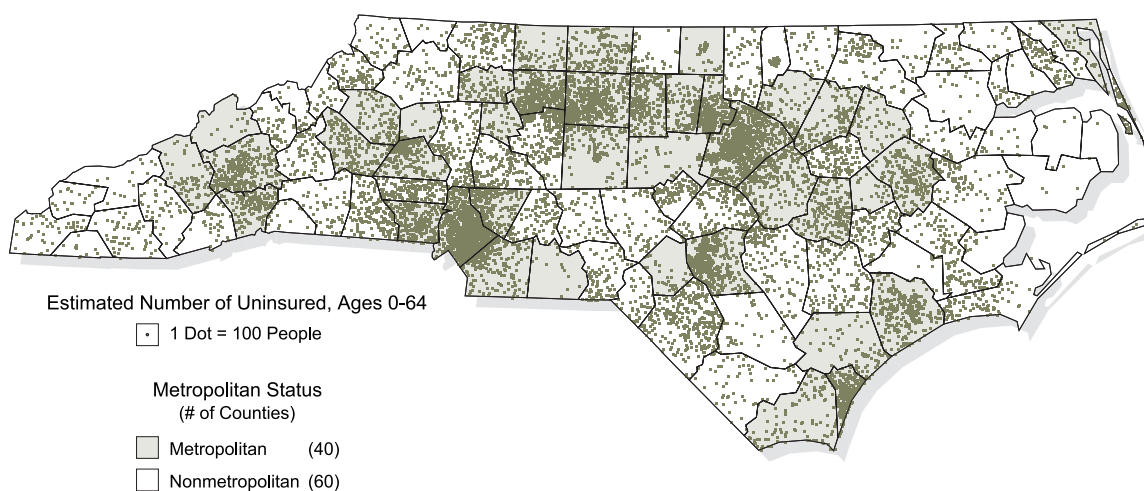
Source: Synthetic estimates based on Annual Social Economic Supplement, US Census Bureau, 2004-2005.

Full report available at <http://www.shepscenter.unc.edu>.

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The maps show that higher proportions of the population in the more rural areas of the eastern part of the state and the northern and southern mountain counties are more likely to be uninsured with a notable “cluster” of high rates in the region including Onslow, Jones, Duplin, Sampson, and Pender counties. The second map indicates that the absolute numbers of uninsured are concentrated in the urban counties. The problem of uninsurance is a statewide phenomenon with rates and numbers showing slightly different effects across the state. Since some areas of the state have lower average incomes or more employees of small businesses, these areas will generally have more uninsured people. Policymakers may wish to focus efforts in areas with particularly low insurance coverage rates. Local healthcare providers may better demonstrate the extent of their need for government and philanthropic support using estimates of local uninsured populations.

Number of Residents Aged 0-64 without Health Insurance North Carolina, 2004



Produced by: Program on Health Economics and Finance, Cecil G. Sheps Center for Health Services Research, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Sources: Uninsured Data—Synthetic estimates based on Annual Social Economic Supplement, US Census Bureau, 2004-2005. Metropolitan Status—US Census Bureau and Office of Management and Budget, 2003.

Full report available at <http://www.shepscenter.unc.edu>.

Note: Dots are scattered randomly throughout zip code areas and are not intended to locate a particular place or population.

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