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Comparing State Uninsurance Estimates: SHADAC-Enhanced CPS and CPS

Introduction

The Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC) to the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey (CPS) is one of the most widely used sources of information on health insurance coverage, particularly for state-level estimates. One of the main advantages of the CPS as a data source is that the health insurance estimates are available from 1987 forward, making it possible to monitor state-level trends over time.

SHADAC has developed and made available a data series (the "SHADAC-Enhanced CPS") that makes several adjustments to the CPS estimates. There are two main types of adjustments to the data:

Consistency over time: The SHADAC-enhanced estimates reweight and adjust the CPS data to account for historical changes in the survey's methodology, the conceptual definition of health insurance, and how responses are weighted to the U.S. population.¹

Adjustments for missing data: The SHADAC-enhanced CPS estimates exclude respondents who did not complete any portion of the ASEC, while the Census Bureau uses an imputation process to assign values to these respondents. This is an important difference, because about 10 percent of the responses to the ASEC supplemental questionnaire are imputed. Because the imputation process has been shown to result in overestimating the level of uninsurance, we believe that excluding these cases produces more accurate estimates of health insurance coverage.^{1,2}

The enhanced estimates generally result in lower estimates of uninsurance than estimates from the CPS. There are several reasons for this, but two of the primary reasons are the exclusion of respondents with imputed data (described above) and an adjustment for 1999 and earlier years before the CPS added a health insurance verification question. SHADAC believes that the enhanced estimates are more valid for any given year, and are the most consistent measure of health insurance coverage available over time. The SHADAC-Enhanced CPS will be maintained so that a consistent time series continues to be available in the future.

Figure 1 illustrates the difference between the SHADAC-Enhanced CPS and CPS estimates over time, at a national level.

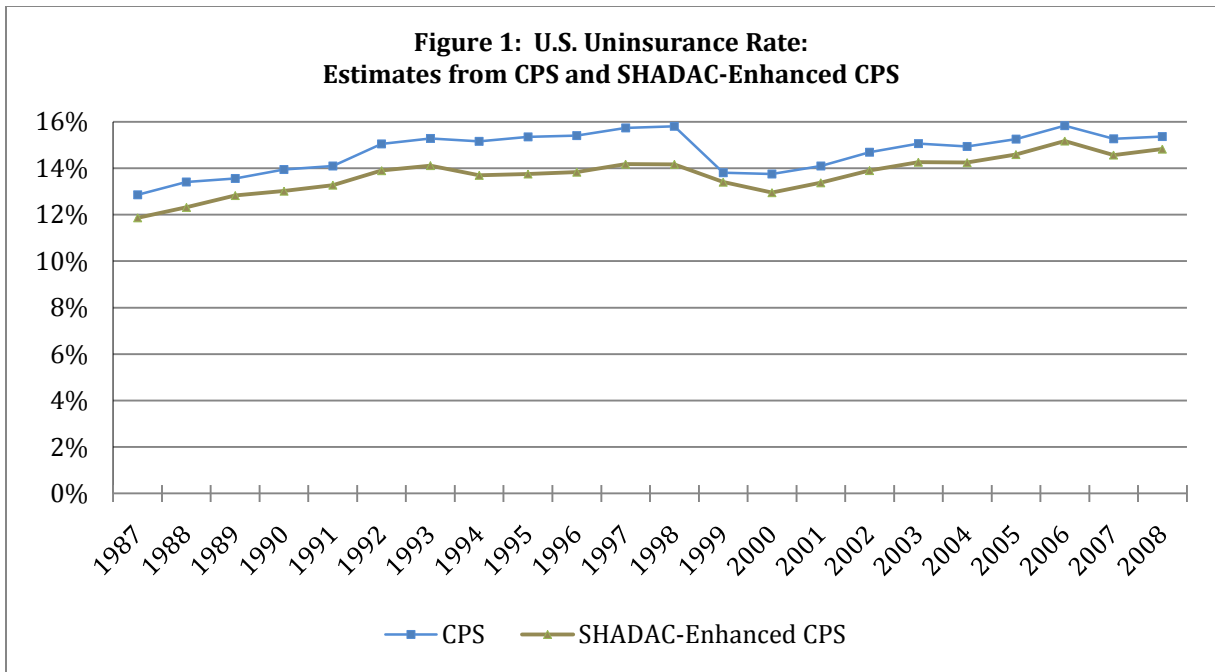


Figure 2 shows the difference between the SHADAC-Enhanced CPS and CPS estimates of uninsurance by state for 2007-08, and Figure 3 presents these state results in tabular form.

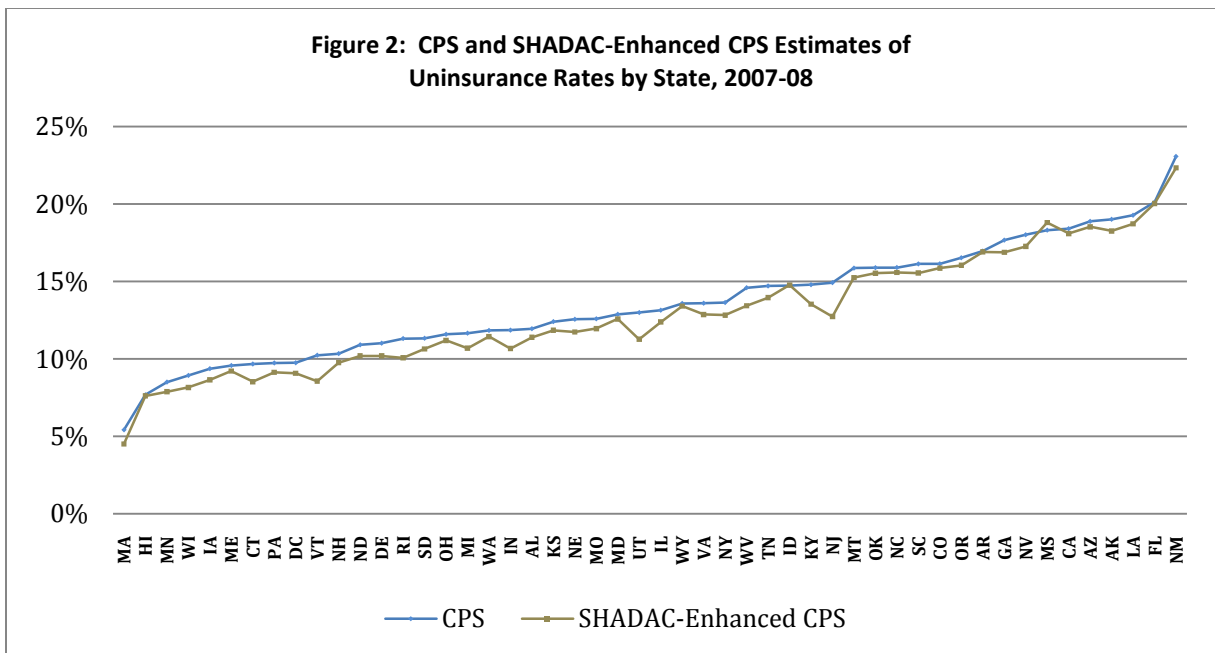


Figure 3: Difference in CPS and SHADAC-Enhanced CPS Estimates of Uninsured by State, 2007-08

State	CPS	SHADAC-Enhanced CPS	Difference
Alabama	11.9%	11.4%	-0.6%
Alaska	19.0%	18.3%	-0.8%
Arizona	18.9%	18.5%	-0.3%
Arkansas	17.0%	16.9%	-0.1%
California	18.4%	18.1%	-0.3%
Colorado	16.1%	15.9%	-0.3%
Connecticut	9.7%	8.5%	-1.1%
Delaware	11.0%	10.2%	-0.8%
District of Columbia	9.8%	9.1%	-0.7%
Florida	20.1%	20.0%	-1.1%
Georgia	17.7%	16.9%	-0.8%
Hawaii	7.7%	7.6%	-0.1%
Idaho	14.7%	14.8%	0.0%
Illinois	13.1%	12.4%	-0.8%
Indiana	11.9%	10.7%	-1.2%
Iowa	9.4%	8.7%	-0.7%
Kansas	12.4%	11.8%	-0.6%
Kentucky	14.8%	13.5%	-1.2%
Louisiana	19.3%	18.7%	-0.6%
Maine	9.6%	9.2%	-0.4%
Maryland	12.9%	12.6%	-0.3%
Massachusetts	5.4%	4.5%	-0.9%
Michigan	11.7%	10.7%	-1.0%
Minnesota	8.5%	7.9%	-0.6%
Mississippi	18.3%	18.8%	0.5%
Missouri	12.6%	12.0%	-0.6%
Montana	15.9%	15.3%	-0.6%
Nebraska	12.6%	11.7%	-0.8%
Nevada	18.0%	17.3%	-0.8%
New Hampshire	10.3%	9.8%	-0.6%
New Jersey	14.9%	12.7%	-2.2%
New Mexico	23.1%	22.3%	-0.7%
New York	13.6%	12.8%	-0.8%
North Carolina	15.9%	15.6%	-0.3%
North Dakota	10.9%	10.2%	-0.7%
Ohio	11.6%	11.2%	-0.4%
Oklahoma	15.9%	15.5%	-0.4%
Oregon	16.5%	16.0%	-0.5%

State	CPS	SHADAC-Enhanced CPS	Difference
Pennsylvania	9.7%	9.1%	-0.6%
Rhode Island	11.3%	10.1%	-1.2%
South Carolina	16.1%	15.5%	-0.6%
South Dakota	11.3%	10.6%	-0.7%
Tennessee	14.7%	14.0%	-0.7%
Texas	25.1%	24.6%	-0.6%
Utah	13.0%	11.3%	-1.7%
Vermont	10.2%	8.6%	-1.7%
Virginia	13.6%	12.9%	-0.7%
Washington	11.8%	11.4%	-0.4%
West Virginia	14.6%	13.4%	-1.2%
Wisconsin	8.9%	8.2%	-0.8%
Wyoming	13.6%	13.4%	-0.2%
United States	15.3%	14.7%	-0.6%

Health insurance coverage estimates from the SHADAC-Enhanced CPS data series are available in tabular form through SHADAC's Data Center, at <http://www.shadac.org/datacenter>. The Data Center can be used to generate state-level estimates by age, income, race/ethnicity, and other demographic characteristics using data from the CPS, SHADAC-Enhanced CPS, or American Community Survey (ACS). The SHADAC-enhanced CPS variables are available through the Minnesota Population Center's IPUMS CPS data download site, at <http://cps.ipums.org/cps/>.³

Suggested Citation

State Health Access Data Assistance Center. 2010. "Comparing State Uninsurance Estimates: SHADAC-Enhanced CPS and CPS." Issue Brief #21. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota.

Endnotes

¹ Ziegenfuss, J.Y. and M. Davern. "Twenty years of coverage: An enhanced Current Population Survey 1989-2008," *Health Services Research*, forthcoming.

² Davern, M., H. Rodin, L.A. Blewett, and K.T. Call. 2007. "Are the Current Population Survey Uninsurance Estimates too High? An Examination of the Imputation Process," *Health Services Research* 42(5): 2038-55.

³ Refer to SHADAC's technical brief, "Using SHADAC-Enhanced Current Population Survey Health Insurance Coverage Microdata Variables," for information on how to locate and use the enhanced variables, available at http://www.shadac.org/files/shadac/publications/TechBrief_UsingCPSEnhancedData.pdf.

Additional Resources

SHADAC. 2009. "Historical Changes in Current Population Survey Health Insurance Coverage Items for Survey Years 1988 Through 2009," available at <http://www.shadac.org/files/shadac/publications/IssueBrief19.pdf>

A detailed explanation of the SHADAC-Enhanced adjustments can be found in "SHADAC-Enhanced Current Population Survey Health Insurance Coverage Estimates: A Summary of Historical Adjustments," available at http://www.shadac.org/files/shadac/publications/TechBrief_CPSEnhanced.pdf.