

# Report Pegs Deaths to Lack of Health Insurance

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In 2006, more than seven working-age people in the state of Texas died each day because of a lack of health insurance coverage, according to estimates from the consumer group Families USA.

Families USA released state-by-state estimates of deaths attributed to a lack of health insurance for individuals aged 25-64 years. The report builds on the work of the Institute of Medicine, which in 2002 released a report that found that approximately 18,000 individuals aged 25-64 years died in 2000 because they were uninsured. A more recent study from the Urban Institute found that approximately 22,000 people in that age bracket died in 2006 because they didn't have health insurance.

"Our report highlights how our inadequate system of health coverage condemns a great number of people to an early death simply because they don't have the same access to health care as their insured neighbors," Ron Pollack, executive director of Families USA, said during a teleconference to release the report. "The conclusions are sadly clear—a lack of health coverage is a matter of life and death for many people."

In general, the uninsured are less likely to have a usual source of care outside of the emergency department, they often go without screenings and preventive care,

and they frequently forgo needed medical treatment, Mr. Pollack said. While this often results in poor health, in the extreme it also leads to death, he said.

For example, in Utah, where 19% of the 1.2 million working-age people in the state were uninsured in 2006, on average three people died each week because of a lack of health insurance coverage. Between 2000 and 2006, more than 800 people died because of a lack of health insurance, the group estimated.

In Massachusetts, about 12% of the 3.4 million people between the ages of 25 and 64 years were uninsured in 2006. Families USA estimates that more than six working-age individuals in the state died each week in 2006 because of a lack of insurance coverage. Between 2000 and 2006, more than 2,000 working-age adults died because they didn't have insurance coverage, the group estimated.

However, these numbers are likely to improve in the next couple of years as

more people gain insurance coverage as a result of health reform legislation passed in that state, Mr. Pollack said.

The Families USA estimates are based on 2000-2005 state mortality and population data from the National Center for Health Statistics and the U.S. Census Bureau Current Population Survey data from 2000 to 2006.

The state by state figures are available online at [www.familiesusa.org](http://www.familiesusa.org).

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