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## Census data shows Iowans among most insured in the nation

8:20 AM

DAVENPORT, Iowa (AP) -- Iowa is among the nation's leaders in having its citizens insured, U.S. Census data released Monday shows.

According to U.S. Census figures, the percentage of Iowans without health insurance was 9.1 percent during 2004-2005 -- a drop from 10.4 percent in 2003-2004.

The figure puts Iowa third in the nation when it comes to having its citizens insured.

One woman who assists those without insurance said she was surprised by the Iowa findings -- and maintains that health care is still a key issue in the state.

Ida Johnson, executive director of United Neighbors Inc., in Davenport, said that while she welcomed the news, her agency is seeing more people asking for help.

"We're seeing extreme cases nowadays," she said. "Health care is one of the biggest issues we have to deal with."

Nationwide, the number of people with health insurance coverage increased by 1.4 million to 247.3 million between 2004 and 2005, but the number without coverage also rose, by 1.3 million to 46.6 million, Census data shows.

The data also shows that the number of uninsured children increased between 2004 and 2005, from 7.9 million to 8.3 million.

An analysis by the Iowa Policy Project shows that the number of people covered by government-funded insurance is growing. The number of Iowans with public health insurance also rose from 539,000 in 2000-01 to 747,000 in 2004-05, according to the Iowa Policy Project.

"The best we can say is that things are not worse for some Iowans," said David Osterberg, executive director. "But more are in poverty, and we're not seeing improvement for middle-income Iowans or the uninsured."

State statistics show a growing number of Iowa children are signed up for the state- and federally- funded Hawk-I insurance program and Medicaid expansion program, state statistics show. This fiscal year, 34,598 children are registered, compared to 17,927 five years ago.

AP-CS-08-30-06 0145EDT

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