

**Office of Community Health Systems Series on Rural – Urban Disparities**

**The Gap in Healthcare Insurance Coverage  
Washington State, 2011-2015**

**Facts (2011-2015)**

Healthcare insurance remains one of many factors influencing the overall health status of populations.

Almost everyone over the age of 64 has Medicare.

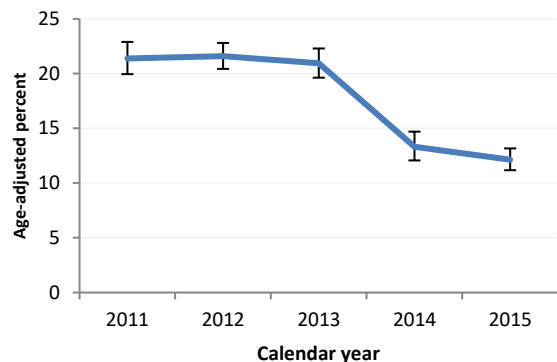
About 96 percent of children under 18 have health insurance. The biggest gap is for adults ages 18-64: In 2015, about 12 percent did not have health insurance.

For large town areas, the uninsured rates declined from 24.7 percent in 2011 to 19.0 percent in 2015. For small town/rural areas, the uninsured rates declined from 30.9 percent in 2011 to 14.9 percent in 2015.

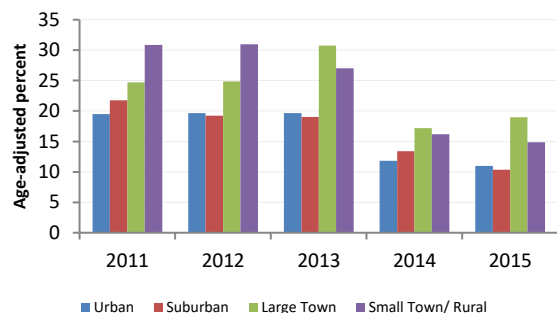
Despite a decline of the percent of the uninsured after 2013, for all levels of geography; urban-rural gaps still persist.

In general, the percent of uninsured increases as the level of geography moves from urban to small town/rural areas.

**Figure 1. Adults age 18-64 without health insurance**



**Figure 2. Adults age 18-64 without health insurance by rurality, Washington State 2011-2015**



**Public Health Systems Implications:**

To comply with the national *Healthy People 2020* target of having 100 percent of the population insured, Washington State needs to reduce the gap in the health insurance coverage from about 12 percent in 2015 to zero.

Any effort to increase healthcare insurance coverage should target communities in large town and small town/rural areas where in 2015, (1 in 5) and (1 in 7) adults lack health insurance coverage, respectively.

Published studies have shown increasing healthcare insurance coverage significantly improves the health status of populations. The persistent gap in health insurance coverage among communities underscores the greater need to focus more on rural and underserved populations.

Health insurance coverage includes private health insurance plans, prepaid plans such as HMOs, or government plans such as Medicaid. For more information on children ages 0-18 with health care coverage, see <http://kff.org/other/state-indicator/children-0-18/> Data source for figures 1 and 2: Washington State Department of Health Behavioral Risk Factors Surveillance System (BRFSS). Geography is classified using a modified scheme, based on Rural Urban Commuting Area (RUCA) codes, version 3.1; into urban, suburban, large town, and small town/rural.