Measuring Health Insurance Coverage with the Current Population Survey:
A history of improvement

1981 – Census begins asking some household members about specific types of insurance coverage as part of measuring economic well being.

In 2011, the Census Bureau enhances its methods for data processing, releasing revised figures on health insurance coverage back to 1999.

Note: CPS measures prior-year coverage, so, for example, 1987 statistics come from the 1988 CPS.

1 Question redesigned in 1988 to include all household members.
2 Figures are revised to correct for nine omitted weights from the original March 1992 CPS file.
3 Implementation of Census 1990 based population controls.
4 Data collection method changed from paper and pencil to computer-assisted interviewing.
5 Health insurance questions were redesigned. Increases in estimates of employment-based and military health care coverage may be partially due to questionnaire changes. Overall coverage estimates were not affected.
6 People with no coverage other than access to Indian Health Service now considered uninsured. Overall estimates of health insurance coverage change only negligibly; however, the decrease in the number of people covered by Medicaid may be partially due to this change.
7 Follow-up verification question added.
8 Change in census population basis
9,13 CHIP Implementation of a 28,000 household sample expansion.
10,11,14 These estimates from the 2005 ASEC were revised based on improvements to the algorithm that assigned coverage to dependents, and there was an adjustment to the weights. Triangle represents original estimate.
15 Implementation of Census 2010-based population controls.

Change in census population basis

United States Census Bureau
U.S. Department of Commerce
Economics and Statistics Administration
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU
census.gov

Source: Table HI-1. Health Insurance Coverage Status and Type of Coverage by Sex, Race and Hispanic Origin: 1987 to 2005
http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/hlthins/data/historical/orghihistt1.html

Health Insurance Historical Tables - HIB Series
http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/hlthins/data/historical/HIB_tables.html