



Health Insurance on the Farm



2000 Health Insurance Survey of North Dakota Farm and Ranch Operators

What is the current health insurance situation for North Dakota's farmers and ranchers? How do farm families compare with the general population in terms of health insurance?

A recently completed survey on health insurance coverage for North Dakota's farm population attempts to answer these and other important questions. The 2000 Health Insurance Survey of North Dakota Farm and Ranch Operators was a cooperative effort by the North Dakota Department of Health, the Community HealthCare

Association and USDA's North Dakota Agricultural Statistics Service (NDASS).

The response and volume of respondent comments on the survey was extraordinary. This brochure provides a summary of comments as well as the results of the survey and details on how the survey was conducted.

HEALTH INSURANCE SURVEY, NORTH DAKOTA, MAY 2000 Health Insurance Coverage

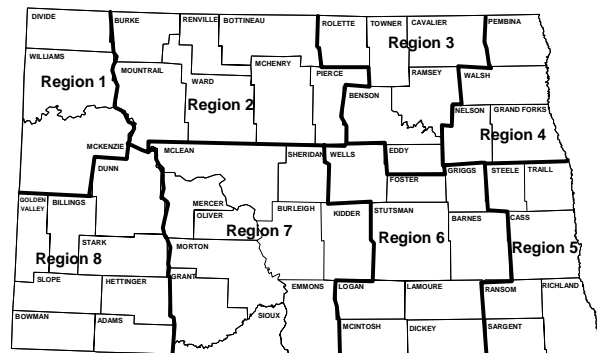
| Item | Total | Regions | | | | | | | |
|---|-------|---------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| Households (Number) | 1,374 | 87 | 239 | 145 | 116 | 170 | 239 | 245 | 133 |
| Households With No Health Insurance | 78 | 2 | 16 | 4 | 4 | 10 | 17 | 14 | 11 |
| Households With Health Insurance ^{1/} | 1,296 | 85 | 223 | 141 | 112 | 160 | 222 | 231 | 122 |
| Private Health Insurance Coverage ^{1/} | 1,240 | 80 | 214 | 136 | 109 | 158 | 215 | 219 | 109 |
| Public Health Insurance Coverage ^{1/} | 357 | 29 | 67 | 38 | 30 | 31 | 54 | 67 | 41 |
| | 26% | 33% | 28% | 26% | 26% | 18% | 23% | 27% | 31% |
| Individuals (Number) | 4,080 | 228 | 715 | 426 | 349 | 546 | 708 | 729 | 379 |
| Uninsured | 246 | 8 | 47 | 15 | 15 | 23 | 53 | 48 | 37 |
| | 6% | 4% | 7% | 4% | 4% | 4% | 7% | 7% | 10% |
| Insured | 3,834 | 220 | 668 | 411 | 334 | 523 | 655 | 681 | 342 |
| | 94% | 96% | 93% | 96% | 96% | 96% | 93% | 93% | 90% |

^{1/} Coverage may not extend to all household members.

Findings

Findings indicate that 6 percent of the state's farm households had no health insurance. This number is slightly below the 8.6 percent for the state's 1998 general population study. Twenty-six percent of all farm households with insurance had some form of public health insurance, and 90 percent had private health insurance. Only 6 percent of households declined to answer and 6.6 percent were not accessible. On a regional basis, there tended to be more households in the southwestern region (region 8) of the state without health insurance (10 percent).

Regions



Health Insurance

Of all households with private insurance, 69 percent were self-insured and 41 percent were insured through an employer or union (group) membership.

Of those in the latter group, 87 percent had insurance policies that covered all household members. Of these, 76 percent paid some or all of the cost of premiums and almost half of these paid 50 percent or more of

premium costs. Twenty-four percent paid no insurance premiums. Medicare was by far the leading form of public health insurance, providing coverage in 22 percent of surveyed households.

Totals often do not add to 100 because multiple coverages exist in many households.

HEALTH INSURANCE SURVEY, NORTH DAKOTA, MAY 2000 Households With Private Health Insurance

| Item | Total | Regions | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| Self Insured | 858 69% | 59 74% | 140 65% | 98 72% | 77 71% | 106 67% | 150 70% | 148 68% | 80 73% |
| Insured Through Employer/Union | 505 41% | 30 38% | 96 45% | 53 39% | 43 39% | 64 41% | 89 41% | 87 40% | 43 39% |
| All Household Members | 441 87% | 24 80% | 83 86% | 46 87% | 41 95% | 57 89% | 76 85% | 77 89% | 37 86% |
| Some Household Members | 34 7% | 3 10% | 7 7% | 5 9% | 1 2% | 5 8% | 5 6% | 6 7% | 2 5% |
| Single Household Member | 30 6% | 3 10% | 6 6% | 2 4% | 1 2% | 2 3% | 8 9% | 4 5% | 4 9% |
| Pay 1 - 49% of Premium | 200 40% | 11 37% | 42 45% | 25 47% | 19 44% | 22 34% | 35 39% | 28 33% | 18 43% |
| Pay ≥ 50% of Premium | 180 36% | 13 43% | 33 35% | 13 25% | 13 30% | 27 42% | 35 39% | 30 36% | 16 38% |
| No Premium Contribution | 119 24% | 6 20% | 19 20% | 15 28% | 11 26% | 15 23% | 19 21% | 26 31% | 8 19% |
| Households with Private Health | 1,240 | 80 | 214 | 136 | 109 | 158 | 215 | 219 | 109 |

HEALTH INSURANCE SURVEY, NORTH DAKOTA, MAY 2000 Households With Public Health Insurance

| Item | Total | Regions | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| Medicare | 306 22% | 27 31% | 61 26% | 30 21% | 26 22% | 26 15% | 47 20% | 56 23% | 33 25% |
| Medicaid | 57 4% | 4 5% | 7 3% | 9 6% | 8 7% | 4 2% | 7 3% | 10 4% | 8 6% |
| CHAMPUS | 3 - | - - | - - | 1 1% | - - | - - | 1 - | 1 - | - - |
| Healthy Step | 13 1% | - - | 2 1% | - - | - - | 3 2% | - - | 4 2% | 4 3% |
| VA | 21 2% | 1 1% | 1 - | 4 3% | - - | 1 1% | 5 2% | 6 2% | 3 2% |
| IHS | 4 - | - - | 1 - | 3 2% | - - | - - | - - | - - | - - |
| Other | 14 1% | 1 1% | 3 1% | 1 1% | 3 3% | 1 1% | - - | 4 2% | 1 1% |
| Households in Survey | 1,374 | 87 | 239 | 145 | 116 | 170 | 239 | 245 | 133 |

HEALTH INSURANCE SURVEY, NORTH DAKOTA, MAY 2000 In the Last 12 Months, Did Any Household Member Not Receive Medical Care or Delay Medical Care Because of No Health Insurance or Inadequate Health Insurance?

| Item | Total | Regions | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|--------------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| Yes | 87 6% | 2 2% | 10 4% | 11 8% | 4 3% | 8 5% | 18 8% | 24 10% | 10 8% |
| No | 1,287 94% | 85 98% | 229 96% | 134 92% | 112 97% | 162 95% | 221 92% | 221 90% | 123 92% |
| Number of Households | 1,374 | 87 | 239 | 145 | 116 | 170 | 239 | 245 | 133 |

HEALTH INSURANCE SURVEY, NORTH DAKOTA, MAY 2000
Households With One or More Members Without Health Insurance

| Item | Total | Regions | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|----------|---------|----------|---------|---------|---------|----------|----------|---------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| 1 Household Member not Covered | 60 4% | 4 5% | 15 6% | 6 4% | 2 2% | 4 2% | 10 4% | 12 5% | 7 5% |
| 2 Household Members not Covered | 29 2% | 2 2% | 3 1% | 3 2% | - | 3 2% | 7 3% | 6 2% | 5 4% |
| 3 Household Members not Covered | 10 1% | - | 2 1% | 1 1% | 1 1% | 1 1% | 2 1% | 1 - | 2 2% |
| 4+ Household Members not Covered | 18 1% | - | 3 1% | - | 2 2% | 2 1% | 4 2% | 4 2% | 3 2% |
| Households in Survey | 1,374 | 87 | 239 | 145 | 116 | 170 | 239 | 245 | 133 |

HEALTH INSURANCE SURVEY, NORTH DAKOTA, MAY 2000
Reasons Given for Not Having Health Insurance

| Item | Total | Regions | | | | | | | |
|--|------------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| Too Expensive/Can't Afford | 101 86% | 5 83% | 19 83% | 8 80% | 3 60% | 8 80% | 21 91% | 20 87% | 17 100% |
| Don't Need It/Healthy | 15 13% | - | 2 9% | 2 20% | - | 1 10% | 4 17% | 3 13% | 3 18% |
| Medical Problems/Preexisting Conditions | 9 8% | 1 17% | 3 13% | - | - | - | 1 4% | 2 9% | 2 12% |
| Don't Believe in Insurance | 4 3% | - | - | - | 1 20% | 1 10% | 2 9% | - | - |
| Religious Convictions | 1 1% | - | 1 4% | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Free or Inexpensive Care Available | 1 1% | - | - | - | 1 20% | - | - | - | - |
| Other | 4 3% | - | 1 4% | - | - | - | 1 4% | 2 9% | - |
| Households With at Least One or More Uninsured Members | 117 | 6 | 23 | 10 | 5 | 10 | 23 | 23 | 17 |

Methods

This survey was conducted by North Dakota Agricultural Statistics Service (NDASS) at the request of the North Dakota Department of Health. Response to this inquiry was voluntary. A random sample of 1571 farm and ranch operators were selected from the universe of active producers maintained by the NDASS. All individual responses are protected from disclosure by statute. Instructions to the respondent said, "Please report for all members of the household of the farm operator identified . . . Do not include other households which may be associated with the operation." In this manner the reporting

unit was restricted to the household of active farm operators. The questionnaire was mailed on March 20. Included was a cover letter from the State Health Office requesting cooperation, and postage paid return envelopes. A total of 523 questionnaires, or 33 percent, were returned by mail and only 9 questionnaires were returned with an undeliverable or unknown address.

Telephone follow-up began on April 3 and continued through April 13. A total of 843 (54 percent) questionnaires were completed by telephone, using computer-assisted data collection techniques.

Combining mail and telephone response, only 88 (6 percent) respondents refused to complete an interview. This is a remarkably low refusal rate for a voluntary survey. The residual 117 respondents not tabulated as complete or refusal include operators who have left farming, and those that were inaccessible by phone during the data collection period.

Respondents were given the opportunity to comment on survey content. Comments were prompted with the statement "such as availability, affordability, coverage of your current health insurance." Comments were tabulated by the subject they addressed.

Respondent Comments

The volume of respondent comments on the 2000 Health Insurance Survey of Farm and Ranch Operators was extraordinary, far exceeding the volume of comments received on typical NDASS surveys. A total of 619 comments was recorded from 1,374 interviews.

A tabulation of significant comment categories was made.

The following representative comments from each category are paraphrased:

HIGH PREMIUMS: *55 percent of all comments (most frequent)*

Very concerned about high monthly premiums. Can't afford not to carry it, we could lose the farm.

With low farm prices, we will have to cancel our insurance due to the cost.

I have a \$1,000 deductible and pay 20 percent of the next \$5,000; this costs \$500 a month.

We are old and just can't afford to keep up the premium for the medicare supplement, we don't know what we're going to do.

Monthly premiums have more than doubled in two years. There is no prescription program. Have to pay \$2,000 before insurance pays 80 percent. Monthly premiums are too high.

HIGH DEDUCTIBLES: *13 percent of comments*

All we have is major medical...can't afford better coverage. Our deductible is still \$5,000, this is ridiculous.

It's a problem, with high deductibles we can't go in for our eyes and ears, or annual checkups. Can't pay the premium and the clinic bill both.

\$5,000 deductible and premium is still 3 times the cost of food.

Health insurance never covers anything. I don't remember ever reaching our deductible so we always pay out of pocket.

OFF FARM EMPLOYMENT: *11 percent*

A farm wife: the only reason I'm working is the insurance and retirement benefits. It is not for the take home pay.

My husband works off the farm to get us insurance. He works around the clock between his job and the farm. What will we do when he wants to retire?

We're OK because of wife's position, but if I had to do this solely from the farm, we would have dropped it. Neighbors have dropped because they could not afford it and they have kids.

PLEASED WITH COVERAGE: *5 Percent*

Happy with insurance we have.

Just me in the household, I'm pleased with the coverage.

PRESCRIPTION COVERAGE: *4 Percent*

Wish Medicare would cover pills.

It takes almost all of my Social Security check to pay for medicine.

NEED FULLY DEDUCTIBLE PREMIUMS: *4 percent*

Premiums are too high for the self-employed. We should be able to deduct her health insurance premiums from taxes.

SAFETY NET ONLY: *3 Percent*

I have nursing home insurance. Health insurance is too expensive.

...have cancer coverage only...

Insurance for major medical only. Routine physicals and tests for preventative care are not covered.