

STATISTICAL BRIEF #346

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Employer-Sponsored Health Insurance for Part-Time Employees in the Private Sector, 2005 versus 2010

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Introduction

Employer-sponsored health insurance is an especially valuable employment benefit for part-time employees who work less than 40 hours per week. Although some part-time workers are offered health insurance, it may not be affordable. As a result of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, beginning in 2014, state-based health insurance exchanges will offer a choice of plans with coverage for part-time employees, along with others, who do not currently receive insurance through their employers.

This Statistical Brief examines trends and variation in availability of employer-sponsored health insurance for part-time employees in the private sector by firm size using data from the 2005 and 2010 Medical Expenditure Panel Survey Insurance Component (MEPS-IC). Only differences between estimates at the 0.05 percent significance level are noted in the text.

Findings

The overall percentage of employees who worked part-time in private sector establishments increased from 19.7 percent in 2005 to 21.5 percent in 2010, with similar rises in both small and large firms (figure 1). In 2010, 28.0 percent of small firm employees worked part-time versus 19.0 percent of employees in large firms.

Overall, the percentage of part-time employees who worked at private sector establishments that offered health insurance coverage remained essentially the same in 2010 and 2005 at about 73 percent (figure 2). While the percentage of part-time employees who worked at establishments in large firms that offered coverage was slightly higher in 2010 than in 2005 (94.4 percent versus 90.2 percent), the percentage of part-time employees at establishments in small firms offering coverage declined to 36.0 percent from 43.4 percent over the period.

The percentage of part-time employees eligible for health insurance that were enrolled in health insurance at establishments that offer health insurance declined from 50.6 percent in 2005 to 43.1 percent in 2010 (figure 3). Although the percentage of part-time enrollees in small firms remained the same at about 51 percent over the period, part-time enrollees in large firms declined from 50.5 percent in 2005 to 42 percent in 2010.

Data Source

This Statistical Brief summarizes data from the 2005 and 2010 MEPS-IC. The data are available on the MEPS Web site at http://www.meps.ahrq.gov/mepsweb/survey_comp/Insurance.jsp or have been produced using special computation runs on the confidential MEPS-IC data available at the U.S. Census Bureau.

Highlights

- The percentage of employees who worked part-time in private sector establishments increased from 19.7 percent in 2005 to 21.5 percent in 2010.
- The percentage of part-time employees who worked at small firms offering health insurance coverage declined to 36.0 percent in 2010 from 43.4 percent in 2005.
- The percentage of part-time employees eligible for health insurance that were enrolled in health insurance at establishments that offer health insurance declined from 50.6 percent in 2005 to 43.1 percent in 2010.

Definitions

Employer

In this Statistical Brief, an employer is defined as an establishment in a private sector firm. A firm is defined as a business entity that controls one or more business establishments or locations. Only employers offering health insurance to part-time employees were included in this analysis.

Establishment

A particular workplace or physical location where business is conducted or services or industrial operations are performed. Also known as a site.

Firm size

Small firms are defined as those with fewer than 50 employees while those with 50 or more employees are classified as large. About 75 percent of firms were small and 25 percent were large in both 2005 and 2010.

About MEPS-IC

The MEPS-IC is a survey of business establishments and governments that collects information on employer-sponsored health insurance, such as whether insurance is offered, enrollments, types of plans, and premiums. The survey is conducted annually by the U.S. Census Bureau under the sponsorship of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ). A total sample of approximately 42,000 private sector establishments was selected for the 2010 survey; with 8.3 percent of the sample determined to be out-of-scope during the data collection process. The response rate for the private sector was 82.7 percent of the remaining in-scope sample units.

For more information on this survey, see *MEPS Methodology Reports 6, 8, 10, 14, 17, and 18* and the MEPS-IC Technical Notes and Survey Documentation, which are available on the MEPS Web site (www.meps.ahrq.gov).

References

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Fact Sheet: Affordable Insurance Exchanges: Information for Health Plans. Available at: <http://www.healthcare.gov/news/factsheets/exchanges07112011f.html>

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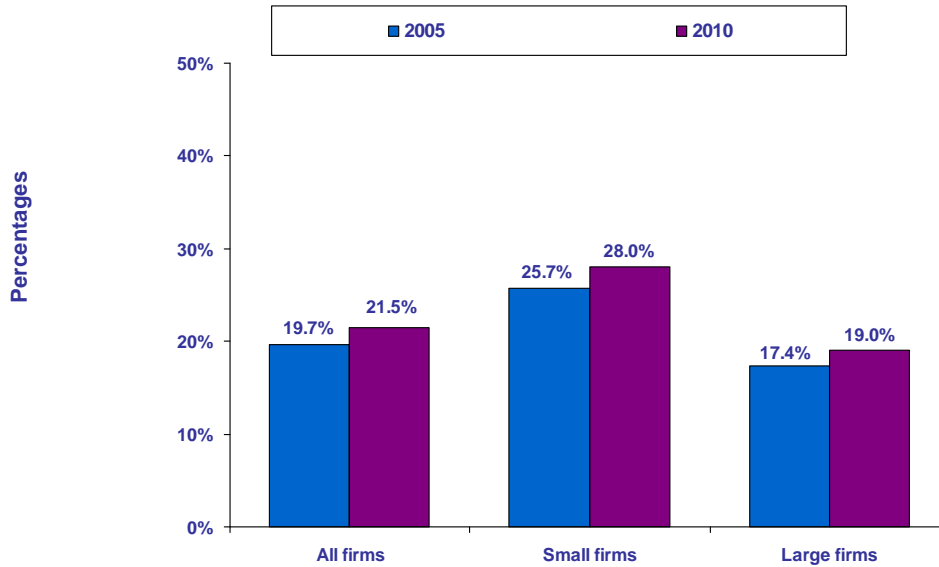
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AHRQ welcomes questions and comments from readers of this publication who are interested in obtaining more information about access, cost, use, financing, and quality of health care in the United States. We also invite you to tell us how you are using this Statistical Brief and other MEPS data and tools and to share suggestions on how MEPS products might be enhanced to further meet your needs. Please e-mail us at MEPSProjectDirector@ahrq.hhs.gov or send a letter to the address below:

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Figure 1. Percentage of private sector employees who work part-time, by firm size, 2005 and 2010

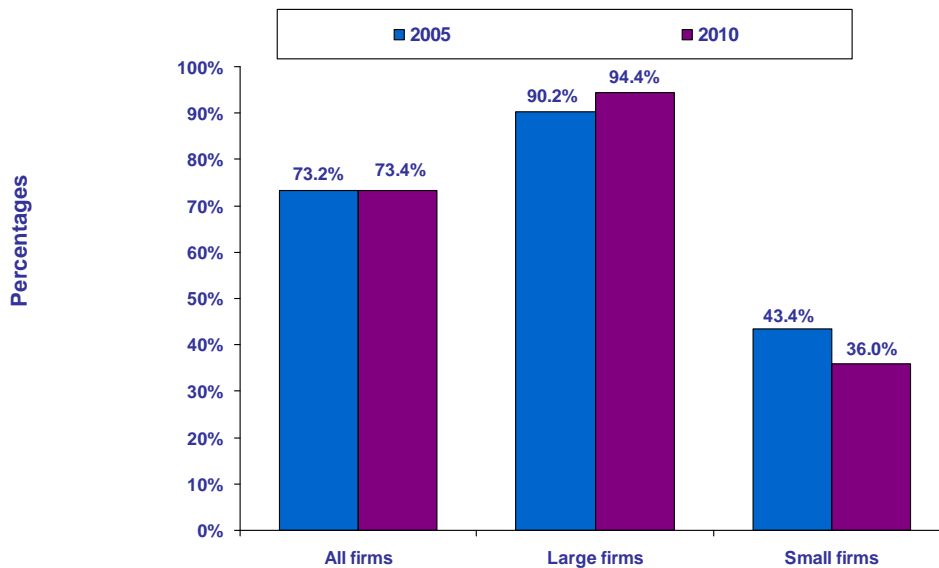


Small firms have fewer than 50 employees; large firms have 50 or more employees.

Source: Center for Financing, Access, and Cost Trends, AHRQ, Insurance Component of the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey, 2005 and 2010



Figure 2. Percentage of private sector part-time employees at establishments that offer health insurance, by firm size, 2005 and 2010

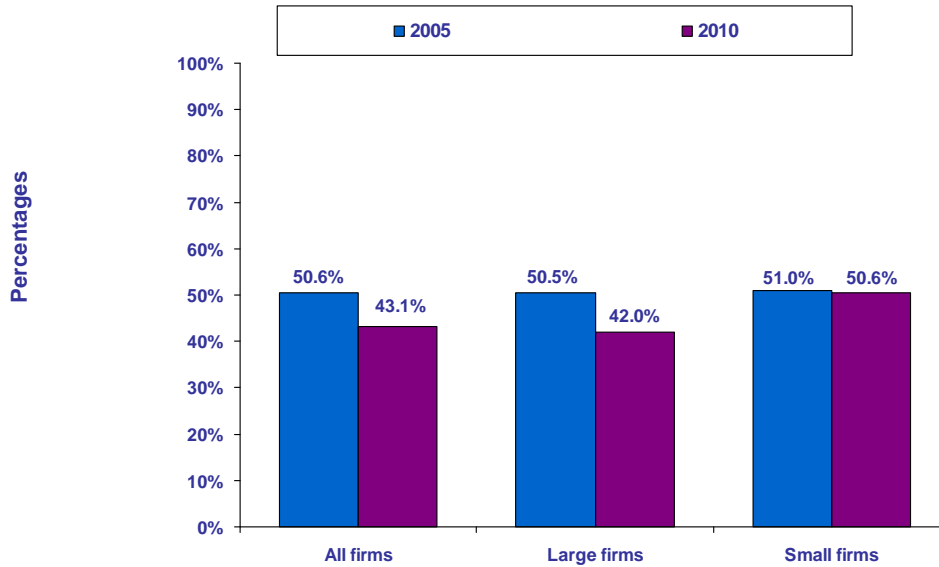


Small firms have fewer than 50 employees; large firms have 50 or more employees.

Source: Center for Financing, Access, and Cost Trends, AHRQ, Insurance Component of the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey, 2005 and 2010



Figure 3. Percentage of part-time private sector employees eligible for health insurance that were enrolled, by firm size, 2005 and 2010



Small firms have fewer than 50 employees; large firms have 50 or more employees.

Source: Center for Financing, Access, and Cost Trends, AHRQ, Insurance Component of the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey, 2005 and 2010