

California Research Bureau  
California State Library

Studies in the News  
Health Supplement

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**Introduction to Studies in the News**

Studies in the News is a current compilation of items significant to the Legislature and Governor's Office. It is created weekly by the State Library's [California Research Bureau](#) to supplement the public policy debate in California. To help share the latest information with state policymakers, these reading lists are now being made accessible through the State Library's website. This week's list of current articles in various public policy areas is presented below. Prior lists can be viewed from the California State Library's Web site at [www.library.ca.gov/sitn](http://www.library.ca.gov/sitn)

- When available, the URL for the full text of each item is provided.

- California State Employees may contact the State Information & Reference Center (916-654-0206; [cslsirc@library.ca.gov](mailto:cslsirc@library.ca.gov)) with the SITN issue number and the item number [S#].
- All other interested individuals should contact their local library - the items may be available there, or may be borrowed by your local library on your behalf.

The following studies are currently on hand:

### AFRICAN AMERICANS

**"Differences in Mortality and Use of Revascularization in Black and White Patients With Acute MI Admitted to Hospitals With and Without Revascularization Services." By Ioana Popescu. IN: JAMA, vol. 297, no. 22 (June 13, 2007) pp. 2489-2495.**

["Blacks are far less likely than whites to get specialized procedures after a heart attack and are more likely to die within a year, according to a study showing persistent racial disparities in U.S. medical care. Blacks were about 30% less likely to get procedures to open blood vessels such as angioplasty or open-heart surgery after a heart attack, whether or not the hospital they checked into provided full invasive cardiac services. They were also 22% less likely to be transferred from a hospital that did not do such procedures to one that did. And when they were, blacks were 23% less likely to get these operations than whites." Los Angeles Times (June 18, 2007) F6.]  
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### ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

**"Classification and Prediction of Clinical Alzheimer's Diagnosis Based on Plasma Signaling Proteins." By Sandip Ray and others. IN: Nature Medicine. (October 14, 2007) doi:10.1038/nm1653.**

["Researchers at Stanford University have developed a first-of-its-kind blood test that, according to preliminary studies, is able to identify patients with Alzheimer's disease – an ailment that has been notoriously difficult to diagnose. The test has also shown promise in predicting which patients with mild memory loss are at high risk of developing the dreaded syndrome, which each year kills 66,000 Americans and inflicts incalculable heartache on the families of its victims." San Francisco Chronicle (October 14, 2007) 1.]

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### CANCER

**"DDT and Breast Cancer Revisited: New Ending in an Old Debate." By John Manuel. IN: Environmental Health Perspectives, vol. 115, no. 10 (October 2007) pp. 1406–1414.**

<http://www.ehponline.org/members/2007/10260/10260.pdf>

["Women heavily exposed to the pesticide DDT during childhood are five times as likely to develop breast cancer.... The team measured DDT in blood collected between 1959 and 1967.... Scientists said the study was particularly important because the blood was drawn when DDT was still heavily used, so it offered a snapshot of women with levels on an order of magnitude higher

than today. ... The women in the top third of DDT concentrations who were exposed before age 14 were five times as likely to get breast cancer as the women with lowest levels." Los Angeles Times, (September 30, 2007) 1.]

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## HEALTH CARE REFORM

**What Does It Take for a Family to Afford to Pay for Health Care? By David Carroll, California Budget Project, and others. (The Project, Sacramento, California) August 2007. 14 p.**

<http://www.cbp.org/pdfs/2007/RevisedCBPUCLAffordabilityReport.pdf>

["An effective health care reform plan for California would need to provide state subsidies for the full cost of health insurance for more people than is called for in plans by either Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger or Democratic legislative leaders. Citing the high cost of living in California, researchers said that full subsidies for health insurance should be available to residents with incomes that do not exceed 200% of the federal poverty level and that partial subsidies should be available for those with incomes up to 300% of the poverty level." California Healthline (August 2, 2007) 1.]

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## HEALTH INSURANCE

**Ninety Years of Health Insurance Efforts in California. By Michael Dimmitt, California Research Bureau, California State Library. CRB 07-013. (The Bureau, Sacramento, California) October 2007. 61 p.; Appendix.**

[www.library.ca.gov/crb/07/07-013.pdf](http://www.library.ca.gov/crb/07/07-013.pdf)

["The report discusses the important issues that are central to increasing the number of insured in California.... Efforts to expand health care coverage in California extend back to at least 1918.... Over the last 90 years, several measures to extend health care coverage to the general population of Californians have been adopted by the legislature and signed by the governor."]

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## HEALTH INSURANCE

**The Erosion of Employment-Based Insurance: More Working Families Left Uninsured. By Elise Gould, Economic Policy Institute. (The Institute, Washington, DC) November 1, 2007. 24 p.**

<http://www.epi.org/briefingpapers/203/bp203.pdf>

["Nationwide, about 63 percent of Americans have health policies offered by their employers. But in California, only 55.7 percent of workers were covered through their jobs last year, making it the state with the fifth-lowest level of employer-sponsored coverage. The number of employers offering health insurance has fallen nationally in recent years due to rising premiums and the

diminishing bargaining power of the average worker.... In California, the problem is worse due to the sheer size of the population and the fact a large number of residents work in jobs that typically do not offer health insurance, such as agriculture, hospitality and the service industry." San Francisco Chronicle (November 2, 2007) 1.]

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## HEALTH INSURANCE

**California Small Business Healthcare Survey. By Small Business for Affordable Healthcare. (SBAH, Sausalito, California) August 23, 2007. 16 p.**

<http://www.smallbusinessforhealthcare.org/pdf/CA%20Small%20Business%20Healthcare%20Survey%20Report%2008-23-07.pdf>

["Many California small-business owners would be willing to dip into their own pockets to help solve the state's health insurance problems, according to a new coalition of business owners in favor of health care reform. The coalition released a survey that said 55 percent of small-business owners would be willing to pay into a statewide fund to help their employees get affordable health coverage." San Francisco Chronicle (August 24, 2007) 1.]

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## HEALTH INSURANCE

**Snapshot: Health Insurance: Can Californians Afford It? By the California Healthcare Foundation. (The Foundation, Oakland, California) June 2007. 32 p.**

<http://www.chcf.org/documents/insurance/Affordability07.pdf>

["This chart book examines changes in the affordability and generosity of health insurance in California in the individual and small group markets. Some key findings from the study are: 1) the costs of coverage and care represent a large share of income, particularly for individual purchasers; 2) in exchange for lower monthly premiums, those purchasing coverage through the individual market bear a greater share of the costs of care; and 3) for those with chronic conditions, annual out-of-pocket medical ."]

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## HEALTH INSURANCE

**Universal Health Care. By Laura Tobler, National Conference of State Legislatures. LegisBrief, Vol. 15, No. 2. (The Conference, Denver, Colorado) April/May 2007. 2p**

["With bipartisan support, many states are creating comprehensive laws or proposals to improve access to health care and decrease the number of uninsured. Several themes are common to states' efforts, including individual mandates for minimum insurance coverage, employer assessments/mandates, expanded Medicaid /SCHIP (State Children's Health Insurance Program), coverage of uninsured children, subsidized insurance, connector or exchange authorities (independent public authorities that pool insurance to offer more affordable private options to individuals), focusing on quality, and prevention/wellness initiatives."]

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## HEALTH INSURANCE

**Health Insurance Coverage: Early Release of Estimates from the National Health Interview Survey, 2006.** By Robin A. Cohen, and Michael E. Martinez, Division of Health Interview Statistics, National Center for Health Statistics. (The Center, Atlanta, Georgia) June 2007. 19 p.

<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nhis/earlyrelease/insur200706.pdf>

["In 2006, there were 43.6 million Americans of all ages who did not have health insurance. Among working-age Americans, there were 19.8% who did not have health insurance in 2006, a slight increase from 18.9% in 2005. Approximately 9.3% of children under the age of 18 did not have health insurance in 2006, a decrease from 13.9% in 1997. The percentage uninsured at the time of interview among the 20 largest states ranged from 7.7% in Michigan to 23.8% in Texas." CDC Press Release (June 25, 2007) 1.]

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## HEALTH INSURANCE

**Cost-Shifting in California Hospitals: What Is the Effect on Private Payers?** By Daniel P. Kessler, Graduate School of Business and Hoover Institution, Stanford University. (California Foundation for Commerce and Education, Sacramento, California) June 6, 2007. 28 p.

[http://www.cfcepolicy.org/NR/rdonlyres/92176667-50FF-4C2F-A47B-B66CE79D4998/24/CFCE\\_Cost\\_Shift\\_Study.pdf](http://www.cfcepolicy.org/NR/rdonlyres/92176667-50FF-4C2F-A47B-B66CE79D4998/24/CFCE_Cost_Shift_Study.pdf)

["Californians without medical insurance are a much smaller factor in increasing health care premiums in the state than low funding from government programs such as Medicare and Medi-Cal. The study found that low reimbursements from the federal Medicare program and from Medi-Cal, the state-federal program for low-income people, account for the lion's share of the cost shift to insurers -- 10.8 percent." San Francisco Chronicle (June 7, 2007) 1.]

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## HEALTH INSURANCE

**Aiming Higher: Results from a State Scorecard on Health System Performance.** By Joel C. Cantor, Rutgers University Center for State Health Policy, and others. Prepared for the Commonwealth Fund Commission on a High Performance Health System. (The Fund, New York, New York) June 2007.

["The report presents state performance on 32 indicators, with overall rankings as well as ranks on each dimension.... Leading states outperform lagging states on multiple indicators and dimensions; yet, all states have room to improve.... The findings document wide variation among states and the potential for substantial improvement -- in terms of access, quality, costs, and lives -- if all states approached levels achieved by the top states."]

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Report, 78 p.

[http://www.commonwealthfund.org/usr\\_doc/StateScorecard.pdf](http://www.commonwealthfund.org/usr_doc/StateScorecard.pdf)

Charts, 23 p.

[http://www.commonwealthfund.org/usr\\_doc/Chartpack.pdf](http://www.commonwealthfund.org/usr_doc/Chartpack.pdf)

Data Tables, 62 p.

[http://www.commonwealthfund.org/usr\\_doc/State\\_data\\_tables.pdf](http://www.commonwealthfund.org/usr_doc/State_data_tables.pdf)

## HEALTH INSURANCE

**Snapshot: Employer Health Insurance Costs in the United States. By Christine Eibner and others, RAND Corporation. (California Healthcare Foundation, Oakland, California) July 2007. 24 p.**

<http://www.chcf.org/documents/insurance/EmployerHICostsUS.pdf>

["Health insurance costs to employers rose 97 percent; and the share of total compensation paid as health insurance rose from 6 to 8 percent from 1996 to 2005.... This snapshot provides an overview of trends in employer health insurance costs in the United States.... Employers view rising health care costs as a challenge to their ability to compete in an increasingly global economy. "]

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## HOSPITALS

**The Financial Health of California Hospitals. By PricewaterhouseCoopers. Commissioned by California HealthCare Foundation. (The Foundation, Oakland, California) June 2007. 269 p.**

<http://www.chcf.org/documents/hospitals/HospitalFinancialHealthFullReport.pdf>

["The financial health of California hospitals improved during a five-year period, but one-third of the state's hospitals continue to lose money, reflecting a wide disparity in their performance. Although 28 hospitals closed during 2001 to 2005, the decline was similar to the earlier five-year period. In fact, most survived in a stronger financial state than predicted. However, a gap in financial performance between the most profitable and least profitable hospitals persists."]

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## INFECTIOUS DISEASE

**"Invasive Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus Infections in the United States." By R. Monina Klevens and others. IN: JAMA, vol. 298, no. 15 ( October 17, 2007) pp. 1763- 1771.**

[" It now appears a dangerous type of staph infection is probably killing more Americans each year than AIDS. In recent years, MRSA , methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus, has become more common in hospitals and it has been spreading through prisons, gyms and lockers

rooms, and in poor urban neighborhoods. Most cases were life-threatening bloodstream infections. About 10 percent involved so-called flesh-eating disease." Long Beach Press-Telegram (October 17, 2007) 1. ]

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## MENTAL HEALTH

**"Stress Predicts Brain Changes in Children: A Pilot Longitudinal Study on Youth Stress, Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, and the Hippocampus." By Victor G. Carrion and others. IN: Pediatrics, vol. 119, no 3 (March 2007) pp. 509-516.**

[Severe stress can damage a child's brain.... The researchers found that children with post-traumatic stress disorder and high levels of the stress hormone cortisol were likely to experience a decrease in the size of the hippocampus -- a brain structure important in memory processing and emotion." Biotech Business (September 2007) 1. ]

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## MENTAL HEALTH

**"National Trends in the Outpatient Diagnosis and Treatment of Bipolar Disorder in Youth." By Carmen Moreno and others. IN: Archives of General Psychiatry, vol. 64, no. 9 (September 2007) pp. 994-1101.**

["The diagnosis of bipolar disorder in children and adolescents has risen fortyfold since 1994. The diagnosis of bipolar disorder among adults increased twofold during the same period, researchers said. Until recently, the illness, which appears to run in families, was seldom diagnosed in children." Los Angeles Times (September 4, 2007) 1.]

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## OBESITY

**"The Spread of Obesity in a Large Social Network over 32 Years." By Nicholas A. Christakis and James H. Fowler. IN: New England Journal of Medicine, vol. 357, no. 4 (July 26, 2007) pp. 370-279.**

<http://content.nejm.org/cgi/reprint/357/4/370.pdf>

["Obesity can spread from person to person, much like a virus. When a person gains weight, close friends tend to gain weight, too. People were most likely to become obese when a friend became obese. That increased a person's chances of becoming obese by 57 percent. There was no effect when a neighbor gained or lost weight, however, and family members had less influence than friends. If the new research is correct, it may mean that something in the environment seeded what many call an obesity epidemic, leading a few people to gain weight. Then social networks let the obesity spread rapidly." New York Times (July 25, 2007) 1.]

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## OBESITY

**“The Relationship Between Relative Weight and School Attendance.” By Andrew B. Geier, and others. IN: Obesity Research, vol. 15, no. 8 (August 2007) pp. 2157-2161.**

[“Obese elementary schoolchildren miss a couple more school days on average than their normal-weight classmates, according to a study that says being fat is a better predictor for absenteeism than any other factor.... The study adds to growing research into non-medical complications of being fat, including data suggesting that obese adults miss more workdays and go to college less frequently than people of normal weight.” San Francisco Chronicle (August 10, 2007) 1.]

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## VACCINES

**“Gaps in Vaccine Financing for Underinsured Children in the United States.” By Grace M. Lee and others. IN: JAMA, vol. 298, no. 6 (August 8, 2007) pp. 638-643.**

[“The number of new vaccines recommended for children and adolescents has nearly doubled during the past 5 years, and the cost of fully vaccinating a child has increased dramatically in the past decade. Anecdotal reports from state policy makers and clinicians suggest that new gaps have arisen in financial coverage of vaccines for children who are underinsured (have private insurance that does not cover all recommended vaccines). In 2000, approximately 14% of children were underinsured for vaccines.”]

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