



Arkansas Department of Health  
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Supported by a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

# Arkansas Health Counts

A publication of the Arkansas Center for Health Statistics

December, 1997

Volume 3 Issue 5

## Nearly a fifth of Arkansans don't have health insurance

by Jyotin Vyas, program analyst  
Arkansas Center for Health Statistics

The more money you make...the more education you have, the more likely you are to have health insurance. Eighty-four percent of employed Arkansans have health insurance, while less than half of the unemployed do.

That's according to recent analysis of the ongoing Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System survey, conducted by telephone for the state Health Department.

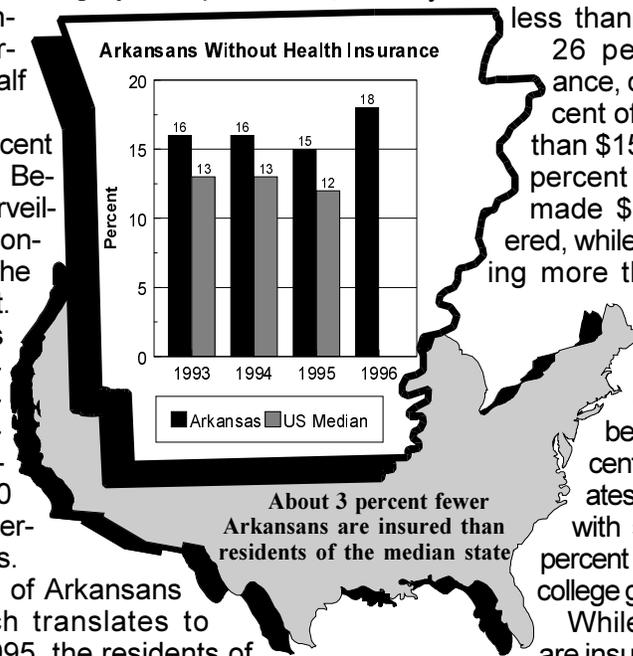
Since 1993, Arkansans have been at least 4 percent less likely to be insured than the U.S. average. The state consistently ranks among the 10 states with the lowest percentage of insured adults.

By 1996, 18 percent of Arkansans were uninsured, which translates to nearly one in five. In 1995, the residents of only seven other states were less likely to be insured than Arkansas residents (15 percent uninsured). Twelve percent of all U.S. residents lacked insurance.

Combining 1995 and 1996 data, about 83 percent of Arkansans are insured. Of those with no insurance, about a quarter have been

that way for five or more years. About 13 percent have never had any insurance.

Those in households earning less than \$15,000 a year are five times more likely to be uninsured than those with incomes of more than \$50,000 a year. Of households with incomes



About 3 percent fewer Arkansans are insured than residents of the median state

less than \$10,000 annually, 26 percent lack insurance, compared to 32 percent of those making less than \$15,000. Only about 5 percent of Arkansans who made \$35,000 aren't covered, while among those earning more than \$75,000, only about 4 percent lack insurance.

High school dropouts are most likely to be uninsured at 22 percent, high school graduates at 18 percent, those with some college at 15 percent and only 7 percent of college graduates.

While people with jobs are insured at an 84 percent clip, only 73 percent of the self employed and 47 percent of the unemployed have insurance. People living in rural areas are almost as likely to be insured as those living in urban areas with about 84 percent of those living in urban areas being insured, compared to 82 percent of those

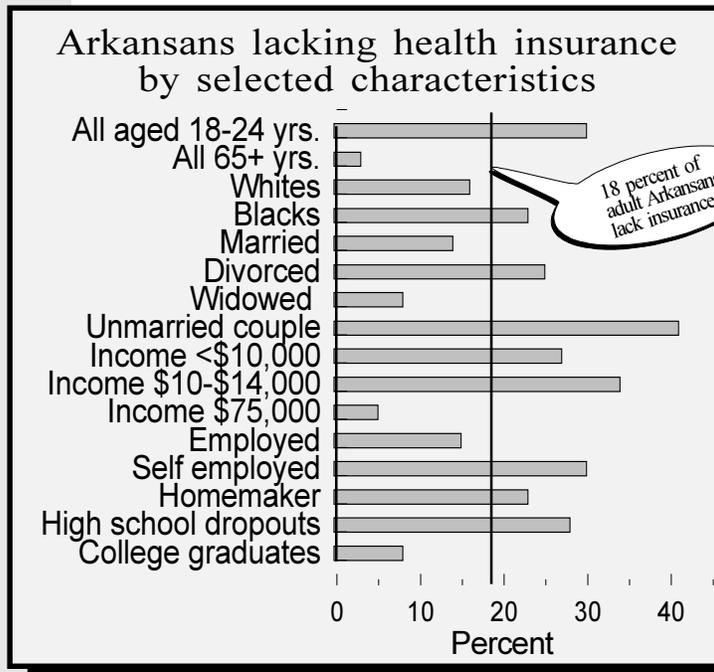
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## Lack insurance

in rural areas.

One in three Arkansans aged 18-24 years is uninsured, but by the time Medicare kicks in at age 65, that drops to less than 4 percent. Almost 80 percent of those 25-64 years have some form of coverage.

Whites (85 percent) are more likely to have insurance than blacks (78 percent.)

Single and divorced persons are twice as likely to be without insurance as married or separated persons. One in three of those who are divorced are uninsured. About 8 percent of widows are uninsured.

Men and women are equally likely to have insurance.

## Death comes in unusual circumstances

Year in, year out, heart disease and cancer account for more than half of all deaths in Arkansas and the United States.

The big numbers deserve and get big attention, but sheer volume insures that the state also gets its share of more improbable deaths.

That is according to Dorene Harris, a state Health Department statistician.

For instance, last year alone, Arkansans died of food poisoning (5), tuberculosis (8), herpes (5), histoplasmosis (2), blastomycosis (7), polio (2) and Legionnaire's disease (2). One death each was attributable to Jakob-Creutzfeldt (similar to the mad-cow) disease, chicken pox, mono-

nucleosis and worms.

Seven people died in off-road vehicle accidents, 15 because of hot or cold weather, three from insect bites or stings, two from dog bites and nine from storm-related causes.

Three people died from explosions, another drowned in the bathtub and one suffocated in a plastic bag.

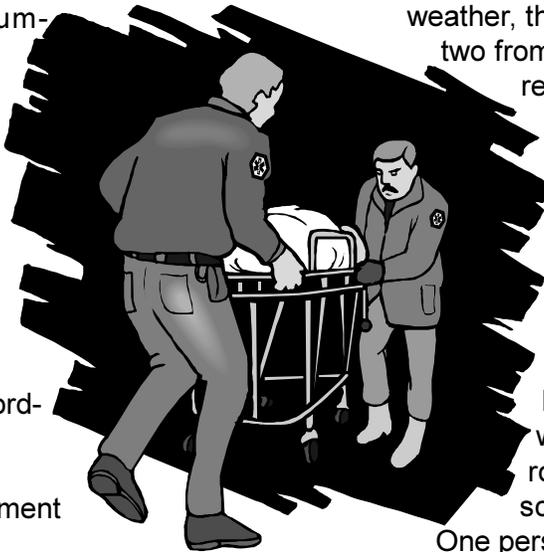
Over the last 20 years, there have been truly unique deaths.

One person drowned in a bowl of soup and another choked on a hair ball. One unconscious person was eaten by small pet dogs. One rodeo participant died riding a scoop shovel pulled by a bull.

One person fell onto a knife in a dishwasher tray and another was poisoned by fumes from decomposing grass clippings.

One was impaled on a broom while sweeping out the back of a truck that was hit by another vehicle.

One elderly person died from complications of a hip broken while turning a cartwheel.



# New HIV/AIDS cases decline overall but increase among women, minorities

by John Hofheimer

Arkansas Center for Health Statistics

While important gains have been made in preventing and treating AIDS, half of the 2,312 Arkansans diagnosed with the disease since 1983 are dead. Despite the well-publicized national decline in the number of new HIV/AIDS cases, women, heterosexuals and minorities increasingly are likely to get it.

The death rate among white males, blacks, Hispanics, and gay and bisexual men declined last year, but AIDS deaths among white Arkansas females increased 25 percent.

The 25 percent overall decline is more dramatic because the state AIDS death rate (7.1 deaths per 100,000 population) already was less than half the national average. Nationally, HIV/AIDS-related deaths through October 1996 declined 19 percent from the previous year.

Arkansas had 152 AIDS-related deaths in 1994, 167 in 1995 and 126 last.

That's also the fourth year in a row new AIDS cases declined here, according to Jan Bunch, state HIV/AIDS surveillance unit administrator. The department confirmed 389 new cases of AIDS in 1993, 295 in 1994; 272 in 1995 and 266 last year.

Through October 12 this year, 184 new AIDS cases have been confirmed, according to Bunch. That's an average of 18 per month, compared to the 1996 monthly average of 22.

At this rate, Arkansas could experience a 14 percent decrease by year's end.

The news isn't all good. Females accounted for 28 percent of new HIV cases in Arkansas through October 12, compared to only 22 percent in 1996 and 19 percent of the HIV cases reported in the state since 1983. Through October 12, females accounted for 22 percent of the new AIDS cases, while they have accounted for only 14 percent since 1983.

Blacks account for only about 12 percent of the state's population, but for 36 percent of the new AIDS cases this year and 43 percent of the new HIV cases. Since 1983, 32 percent of the state's AIDS victims have been black.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention warns that a return to high-

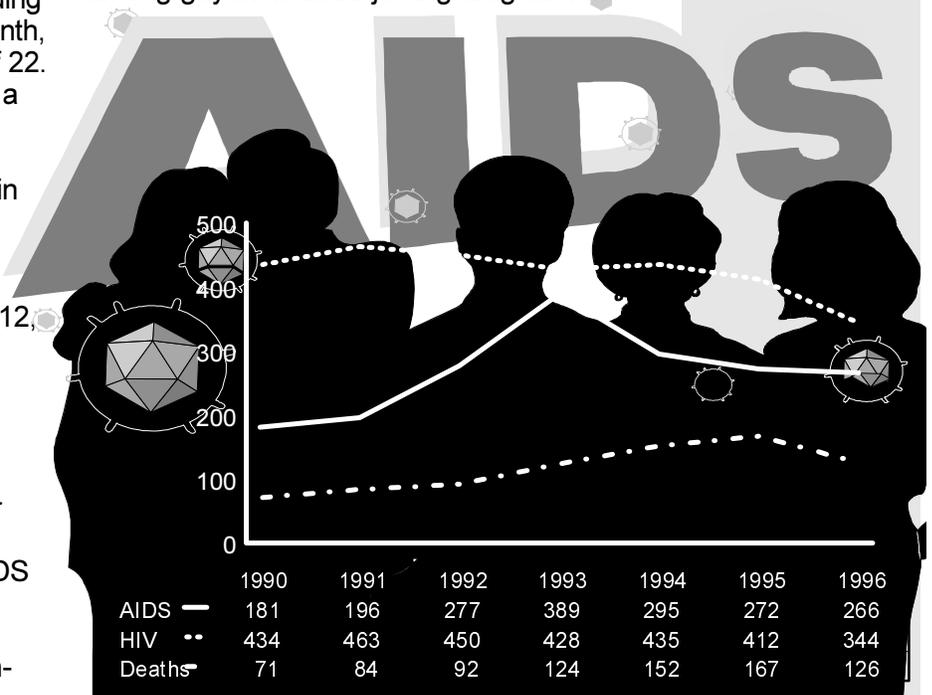
risk sexual behavior may put gay men at increased risk of AIDS. Clinics in San Francisco, Seattle and Portland, Ore., report a 74 percent increase between 1993 and 1996 in gonorrhea among men who have sex with men. One CDC official warned "More people are engaging in behaviors that put them at risk for sexually transmitted diseases, clearly with implications for HIV as well."

"The implications are clear, not only for gay men but for the general population, if this increased risky behavior correlates with people thinking the epidemic [is less serious] because of better therapies," according to Helene D. Gayle of the CDC at Atlanta.

Still, Gayle says "We are entering a new era in this epidemic." The number of AIDS [U.S.] deaths between January and September 1996 was 30,700, versus 37,900 in the same period of 1995. She warned, however, that the trends were not equal across demographic categories.

Blacks now account for the largest proportion of U.S. AIDS cases, 41 percent, she says, and AIDS is increasing most rapidly among women, particularly minorities."

She said that heterosexual AIDS cases are increasing at 15 percent to 20 percent a year, compared with increases of 5 percent or less among gay men and injecting drug users.



# Hannah, Austin top state baby names

There was a little reshuffling this year among the most popular baby names in Arkansas, according to 1996 birth certificate data.

Among names for girls, Madison arrived on the top 10 to claim the number seven position, and Haley joined the top 10 this year, displacing Lauren (8) and Morgan (10) from the 1995 list.

On the boys' side, no new names appeared among the top 10. The biggest change was Michael, which jumped to number four from number eight last year.

As always, Arkansans also provided a good number of departures from the old standards among baby names.

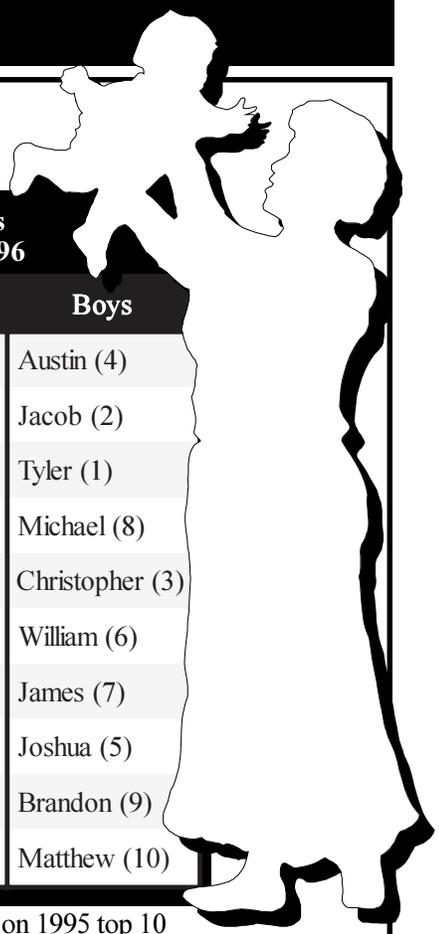
Among names for girls were: Arteshia, Cadence, Canaan, Careagain, Destroy, Disney, Iceshonique, LaMiracle, Messiah, Omega, Sequin, Strawberry-Anne, Taz, Travisty, Treasure and Tyranny.

Boys names included: Apollo, Aries, Brick, Co-chese, Corinthian, Crimson, Laramie, Leonardo, Looper, Magnum, Michelangelo, Nails, Onyx, Paradice, Rainsun, Reality, Shadow, Shady and Story.

## Top 10 Arkansas Baby Names 1996

Girls	number	Boys
Hannah (3)	1	Austin (4)
Emily (4)	2	Jacob (2)
Ashley (1)	3	Tyler (1)
Jessica (2)	4	Michael (8)
Sarah (6)	5	Christopher (3)
Taylor (7)	6	William (6)
Madison (*)	7	James (7)
Kayla (9)	8	Joshua (5)
Brittany (5)	9	Brandon (9)
Haley (*)	10	Matthew (10)

( ) = 1995 position, \* not on 1995 top 10



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