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A protester holds a sign saying "Remove corporate profits from health care now"  
Flickr / Steve Rhodes

## **6.4 Million Californians Don't Have Health Insurance**

*The conclusion belongs to a new official report*

Comprehensive statewide data recorded in California throughout 2007 revealed to UCLA researchers conducting a new statistical study that nearly 6.4 million state residents had no health insurance either for a while, or for the whole year. Some 20 percent of those under the age of 65 also lacked insurances for the same periods of time. The study used data from the California Health Interview Survey (CHIS), which is the latest representative illustration of the population's state of health.

"We're looking at the final year of an economic expansion and yet the gains in coverage were small. If the employer-based system can't increase health insurance in good times, how will they do it in bad? The answer is: they can't. Only comprehensive health care reform will change the equation," argues the director of the Center for Health Policy Research, E. Richard Brown, who is also the main author of the current statistic.

"Our current system of health coverage locks too many families out. We desperately need a system that ensures all Californians have access to health coverage, regardless of health status, income and employment," adds California Endowment president and chief executive officer, Dr. Robert K. Ross.

Researchers hypothesize that the rate of unemployment is the main culprit for such a drastic decline in employment-based health insurances, as this rate rose to 6.8 percent in 2003, and is currently estimated at over 9 percent. Implicitly, the rate of insurance dropped from 56.4 in 2001 to 53.8 in 2003, leaving almost half of the working population exposed.

"This policy brief is another example of the critical information that the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research is able to provide through analysis of data from the California Health Interview Survey. It is difficult to overestimate the relevance of this data source in times like these, when so many Californians lack adequate health coverage," concludes California Wellness Foundation president and CEO, Gary L. Yates.