

**For Immediate Release**

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## **One in Six Oregonians Lacked Health Insurance Survey Also Shows Stagnant Income for Typical Oregon Household**

(Silverton) — As congressional debate on reforming the nation’s health care system continues, a federal survey released today confirmed that about one in six Oregonians lacked health insurance at some point in 2008.

The U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS) also reported that the income of the typical Oregon household in 2008 remained unchanged from the year prior and the start of the decade.

The current levels of health coverage and household median income are “likely worse today,” because the ACS did not cover the deepest period of the recession, according to Joy Margheim, policy analyst with the Oregon Center for Public Policy.

Inquiring for the first time on health coverage, the ACS found that 16.4 percent of the state’s population — about 614,562 Oregonians — lacked health insurance coverage.

“Today’s data offer yet another clear message to Congress of the urgent need for affordable, comprehensive health insurance coverage for everyone,” said Margheim.

An estimated 110,421 Oregon children, or 12.8 percent, lacked health insurance, the survey reported.

The survey results on health coverage released today are in line with the results of the Current Population Survey (CPS), released earlier this month, though Margheim cautioned that because of differences in the questions and survey designs, the two surveys cannot be compared directly.

### ***Oregon Household Income Stagnates***

The ACS also reported that Oregon median household income was \$50,169 in 2008, statistically no different from 2007 or 2000, when

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adjusted for inflation. Oregon's 2008 median household income was statistically lower than the nation's median household income and ranked 27<sup>th</sup> among all states.

Thirty-nine other states also saw no change in real median household income from the year before.

"The typical household in Oregon has made no progress this decade," said Margheim. She warned that next year's survey may show a decline in median household income because it will encompass the deepest part of the recession, with more job and wage losses.

"At both the federal and state level, we need policies that ensure that when this harsh recession comes to an end, all families can share in the benefits of economic growth," said Margheim.

The Oregon Center for Public Policy is a non-partisan research institute that does in-depth research and analysis on budget, tax and economic issues. The Center's goal is to improve decision making and generate more opportunities for all Oregonians.