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SURVEY FINDS MORE THAN 97 PERCENT OF MASSACHUSETTS RESIDENTS HAVE HEALTH INSURANCE

BOSTON—The Patrick Administration announced today the results of a new survey finding that more than 97 percent of Massachusetts residents have health insurance. Only 2.6 percent of state residents remain uninsured. The results of the new survey, which shows that nearly every major demographic group is within a few percentage points of full coverage, reflect the ongoing successful implementation of health care reform.

The report, *Health Insurance Coverage in Massachusetts: Estimates from the 2008 Massachusetts Health Insurance Survey*, shows only about 167,000 people did not have coverage at the time of the survey, which was conducted between June and August 2008. These new data suggest that uninsurance has continued to drop in Massachusetts since 2007, when the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey found that Massachusetts had the lowest insurance rate in the country at about 95 percent.

“Massachusetts has succeeded in covering the uninsured at an amazing rate,” said Secretary of Health and Human Services Dr. JudyAnn Bigby. “Massachusetts now has both the lowest rate of uninsurance in the country and a rate that is less than half that of the next lowest state. The results also show that we have covered nearly every child in the Commonwealth. This is a remarkable achievement, and Massachusetts has already begun to see the benefits.”

Sarah Iselin, Commissioner of the Division of Health Care Finance and Policy added, “These survey results are a clear endorsement of our approach to covering the uninsured but also point to the critical need to tackle the unsustainable growth in health care costs in order to protect the progress we have made.”

The study, conducted by the independent Urban Institute, indicates that insurance coverage is high for Massachusetts residents at all income levels, ranging from 95 percent for those with family income under 300 percent of the federal poverty level to nearly all of those with income above 500 percent of the federal poverty level.

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The survey results show that nearly all elderly adults (>99 percent) and children (>98 percent) are insured, as are more than 96 percent of non-elderly adults ages 19 to 64. Looking more closely at the non-elderly adults who are most likely to be uninsured, the survey shows uninsurance is highest among Hispanic residents at 13 percent. In contrast, the uninsurance rate for white, non-Hispanic residents is three percent.

Eighty-three percent of survey respondents said they are aware of the individual mandate under Massachusetts' health care reform initiative, which requires that most adults obtain insurance. Seventy-five percent said they support the state's health reform efforts, up from 64 percent supporting health reform in 2006.

The survey, which was available in English, Spanish, and Portuguese, was completed by 4,910 households. The margin of error for these estimates is less than +/-1 percentage point. The full report, *Health Insurance Coverage in Massachusetts: Estimates from the 2008 Massachusetts Health Insurance Survey*, is available online at www.mass.gov/dhcfp.

About the Division of Health Care Finance and Policy

The mission of the Division of Health Care Finance and Policy is to improve the delivery and financing of health care by providing information, developing policies and promoting efficiencies that benefit the people of Massachusetts. The Division's goals include assuring the availability of relevant health care delivery system data to meet the needs of health care purchasers, providers, consumers and policy-makers; advising and informing decision-makers in the development of health care policies; developing health care pricing policies that support the cost-effective procurement of high-quality services for public beneficiaries; and improving access to health care for low-income uninsured and underinsured residents.

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