

# Problems of the underinsured in the united states essay



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Healthcare is one of the top economic and social problems facing not only United States but also many other countries in the world. While there are many issues that modern health care needs to deal with the most common problem are health insurance costs. The rising costs of health insurance together with the rising costs of medical care are impacting many families. Inability to pay bills for medical treatment affects now not only uninsured but also people who pay for medical coverage. According to health care statistics published by HealthCareProblems. rg in June 2008 nearly 50 million Americans is not covered by insurance companies. Another 25 million are underinsured, which means they pay for coverage often very high rates and still encounter hardship paying for medical bills. Many of these people have major health issues and amount of money they owe for medical services is substantial. Among them are people that due to chronic medical conditions or serious illness are not able to change insurance companies and shop around to get better premiums.

To keep coverage they have to agree to pay higher premiums, deductibles and co-payments while at the same moment theirs out-of-pocket expenses are getting higher and higher. Study conducted by the Commonwealth Fund shows that over past four years number of underinsured people has increased 60 percent, among them the biggest percentage is represented by families with incomes under the poverty level, but the group of underinsured middle class families is rapidly growing. The number of the underinsured families with incomes of \$40, 000 nearly tripled over these years (Health, 2008).

To categorize person as underinsured many general concepts must be taken to an account but they vary from person to person and depend on circumstances. Researches from the Commonwealth Fund composed definition by looking into percentage of income person spends on their edical expenses. According to the researches underinsured person spends 5 percent income in low income families to 10 percent income on medical bills (Reinberg, 2008). Underinsured person often cannot afford co-payment for doctor visit and therefore they behave similarly to the uninsured patients.

Underinsured person goes to the doctor when it is absolutely necessary; therefore they do not receive preventive care (often not covered by insurance companies) like checkups or lab tests. Similarly underinsured people often do not fill prescriptions as directed, skipping doses of medications or even not following treatment at all. In the survey conducted by Commonwealth Fund 45 percent adults stated that they have hard time paying their bills, sometimes even their health insurance monthly premiums and have collections pending or had them in the past.

Close to 50 percent of people who took part in the survey had to file personal bankruptcy due to medical expenses. Many middle income families reported having serious hardship problems paying for health insurance and medical care. Retirees have to spend their savings (if they have one) Just because Medicaid covers so little and with the prices of prescriptions so high older people find themselves in economic hardship.