According to findings from the Washington State Population Survey (SPS), the percent of Washington residents without health insurance increased from 7.7 percent in 2000 to 8.4 percent in 2002, a 9.1 percent increase. This change represents an additional 53,000 uninsured people in the state for a total uninsured population of approximately 506,000, or about 1 in 12, Washingtonians.

Table 1 contains the number and percent uninsured by family income as a percent of the Federal Poverty Level. The percent of persons below 100 percent of the federal poverty level who were not insured remained essentially constant between 2000 and 2002, 17.8 percent and 17.9 percent respectively. The uninsured rate for the near poor, persons between 100 – 199 percent of FPL, increased 8.9 percent. Washington residents between 200 – 299 percent FPL experienced the largest increase, 29.3 percent, followed by the over 300 percent FPL group with an increase of 12.9 percent. The increase in uninsured numbers is being seen nationally and is reported by the Census Bureau (http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/hlthins.html).

Employer and union-sponsored insurance coverage rates declined from 63.6 percent to 61.8 percent, paralleling national trends. Declines in coverage also occurred in individually purchased plans (5.6 percent to 4.4 percent). Medicare coverage remained steady at 12.1 percent, while coverage under Medicaid increased (11.1 percent to 13.3 percent).

Rates of insurance coverage and the change in rates of coverage since 2000 vary by age (See Table 2). The youngest residents, children 0-18 years old, saw their uninsured rate drop from 5.5 percent in 2000 to 4.5 percent in 2002, an 18.2 percent decline. Working age adults 19-64 years old experienced the largest increase, 15.0 percent, from 10.0 percent in 2000 to 11.5 percent in 2002. Four out of five uninsured persons in Washington are working age adults between 19 and 64 years of age, and approximately 73,000 of the uninsured are children.

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1 This revised briefing paper utilizes the new Medical Assistance weights described in the briefing paper titled “Accounting for Medicare and Medicaid Recipients”, June 2003.