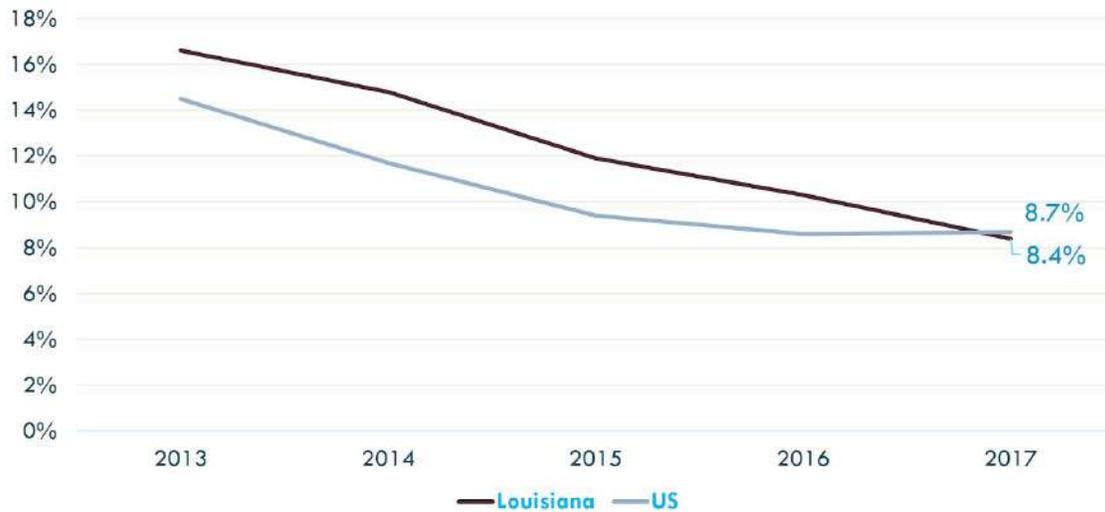


Benefits of Louisiana’s Medicaid expansion evident in new Census data

The percentage of Louisiana residents without health insurance dropped into the single digits for the first time in 2017, according to new data released by the U.S. Census Bureau on Wednesday. The state’s uninsured rate is 8.4 percent, down from 10.3 percent in 2016 and 16.6 percent in 2013, the year before the Affordable Care Act (ACA) took effect. That’s a 49.4 percent drop in the rate of uninsured in just five years.

Louisiana's uninsured rate reaches historic low, drops below national rate



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2017

The ACA’s consumer protections for individuals in the private insurance market and its Medicaid expansion have been the main drivers behind Louisiana’s health insurance gains. The figures released on Wednesday reflect the first full year of Census data since Louisiana expanded Medicaid in 2016 to cover low-income, working-age adults. States that have taken the opposite approach by refusing to expand Medicaid are headed in the opposite direction. For example, the share of uninsured Texans increased from 16.6 percent in 2016 to 17.3 percent in 2017.

Share of residents without insurance increased in Louisiana's neighboring non-expansion states



*changes in the uninsured rate between 2016 and 2017 in MS and AL were not statistically significant at the 90% confidence level

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2017



Nearly [1.6 million](#) Louisianans (1 in 3) receive their health insurance through Medicaid. Included in that number is the [477,500](#) low-income adults who gained coverage and access to life-saving health services over the last two years through Medicaid expansion. Almost 15,000 expansion enrollees have received in-patient mental health care, and 9,100 cases of colon cancer in expansion patients have been avoided through early detection of colon polyps. In addition to increasing access to care, Medicaid expansion has [created 19,000 jobs](#) and generated more than \$3.5 billion in economic activity in Louisiana.

The good news in the latest Census data underscores the importance of the state's investment in the Louisiana Medicaid program, and how critical it is to maintain consumer protections established in the federal health care law. Having health insurance and access to health care is an important factor in keeping Louisiana families healthy and financially secure, which is why the continued drop in the share of Louisianans without health insurance is a welcome trend.

by Jeanie Donovan
September 2018