

STATISTICAL BRIEF #361

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Employer-Sponsored Health Insurance for Employees of State and Local Governments, by Census Division, 2010

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Introduction

Employees of state and local governments were much more likely to be enrolled in employer-sponsored health insurance than their private sector counterparts in 2010. According to data from the Insurance Component of the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey (MEPS-IC), 67.0 percent of state and local government employees were enrolled in employer-sponsored health insurance plans compared to 51.7 percent of private sector employees. State and local government employees were also more likely to work where health insurance is offered than were private employees. Of the 19.6 million state and local government employees in 2010, 77.6 percent were eligible to enroll in employer-sponsored health insurance coverage compared to 67.6 percent of the 108.4 million private sector employees (data not shown).

This Statistical Brief focuses on state and local government enrollment rates, premiums, and employee contributions for employer-sponsored health insurance by census geographic division. These health insurance characteristics varied significantly across the United States for state and local government employees. This Brief also compares private-sector employees to state and local government employees at the national level.

Only those estimates that have a statistically significant difference from the national average at the 0.05 percent significance level are noted in the text. Note that these differences, both between sectors and between census divisions, may also reflect factors such as plan generosity, characteristics of employment, and characteristics of the workforce that are not accounted for in the comparisons.

Findings

The percentage of all state and local government employees enrolled in employer-sponsored health insurance in 2010 was 67.0 percent (figure 1). The enrollment rate in several census divisions differed from the national average. The West North Central (62.5 percent), East North Central (63.0 percent), and New England (64.0 percent) census divisions had enrollment rates lower than the national average. The West South Central (71.9 percent) and Pacific (71.0 percent) census divisions had enrollment percentages higher than the national average. Nationally, among private sector employees, the percentage enrolled in employer-sponsored health insurance (59.8 percent, data not shown) was lower than among state and local government employees.

Highlights

- In 2010, 67.0 percent of employees of state and local governments were enrolled in employer-sponsored health insurance. By census division, enrollment rates ranged from 62.5 percent to 71.9 percent.
- In 2010, the average premium for single coverage for state and local government enrolled employees was \$5,917. The average employee premium contribution per enrollee for single coverage was \$612. Single premiums and contributions by census division frequently varied from the U.S. average.
- The average premium for employer-sponsored health insurance per enrolled employee for family coverage across state and local government employers was \$14,988. In 2010, the average employee contribution towards premiums per enrollee in family coverage was \$2,653. As with single coverage, family premiums and contributions by census division frequently were different from the U.S. average.

In 2010, the average single premium per enrolled employee for employer-sponsored health insurance provided through state and local governments was \$5,917 (figure 2). This was higher than the average single premium of \$4,940 in the private sector (data not shown). The governments in the New England, Pacific, East North Central, and Middle Atlantic census divisions had average single premiums of \$7,284, \$6,613, \$6,499, and \$6,111, respectively—all above the national average. The governments in the West South Central (\$5,101) and South Atlantic (\$5,614) census divisions had lower than average single premiums.

The average employee contribution towards single coverage by state or local government employees was \$612 in 2010 (figure 3). The New England and Pacific census divisions had employee contributions higher than the national average at \$1,240 and \$761, respectively. The census division with the lowest average employee contribution was West North Central at \$364. The South Atlantic, East South Central, and Mountain census divisions also had contributions lower than the national average. In the private sector, the average employee contribution towards single coverage was \$1,021, substantially higher than in the state and local governments nationally (data not shown).

Employees enrolled in family coverage through state and local government jobs had an average premium of \$14,988 (figure 4). In the New England (\$18,340) and the East North Central (\$16,554) census divisions, the family premium was significantly higher than the national average in 2010. The premiums in the Middle Atlantic and West North Central census divisions did not differ from the national average. The remaining census divisions, such as East South Central (\$13,423), all had below-average premiums. Private sector employees enrolled in family coverage had an average premium of \$13,871 nationally (data not shown).

In 2010, the average employee contribution towards family coverage per enrollee in employer-sponsored health insurance provided by state and local governments was \$2,653 (figure 5). Only the West North Central and Pacific census divisions had family contributions not differing from the national average. The Middle Atlantic (\$1,786) and East North Central (\$1,932) census divisions had below average contribution amounts. The remaining census divisions had above average contribution amounts, including West South Central at \$4,503. Private sector employers paid substantially more towards family coverage (\$3,721) on average than state and local government employees (data not shown).

Data Source

This Statistical Brief summarizes data from the 2010 MEPS-IC. The data are available on the MEPS Web site at http://www.meps.ahrq.gov/mepsweb/survey_comp/Insurance.jsp or have been produced using special computation runs on the confidential MEPS-IC data available at the U.S. Census Bureau.

Definitions

Enrollee

An employee who is enrolled in a health insurance plan offered by the employer. Enrollees do not include any dependents covered by the plan.

Health insurance plan

An insurance contract that provides hospital and/or physician coverage to an employee for an agreed-upon fee for a defined benefit period, usually a year. This includes both fully insured and self-insured health insurance plans.

Premium

Agreed-upon fees paid for coverage of medical benefits for a defined benefit period. Premiums can be paid by employers, unions, employees, or shared by the insured individual and the plan sponsor.

Single coverage

Health insurance that covers the employee only.

Family coverage

Health insurance that covers the employee and the employee's family. If a plan offers more than one pricing level for family coverage, information for a family of four was reported.

Census division

- *New England*: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont
- *Middle Atlantic*: New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania
- *East North Central*: Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin
- *West North Central*: Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota
- *South Atlantic*: Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia
- *East South Central*: Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, Tennessee
- *West South Central*: Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas
- *Mountain*: Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming
- *Pacific*: Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon, Washington

About MEPS-IC

The MEPS-IC is a survey of business establishments and state and local governments that collects information on employer-sponsored health insurance, such as whether insurance is offered, enrollments, types of plans, and premiums. The survey is conducted annually by the U.S. Census Bureau under the sponsorship of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ). For state and local governments, the annual average response rate is over 90 percent. In 2010, 3,090 government sample units were selected for the survey.

For more information on this survey, see *MEPS Methodology Reports 6, 8, 10, 14, 17, and 18* on the MEPS Web site at http://www.meps.ahrq.gov/mepsweb/data_stats/publications.jsp and Insurance Component Survey Basics at http://www.meps.ahrq.gov/mepsweb/survey_comp/Insurance.jsp.

Suggested Citation

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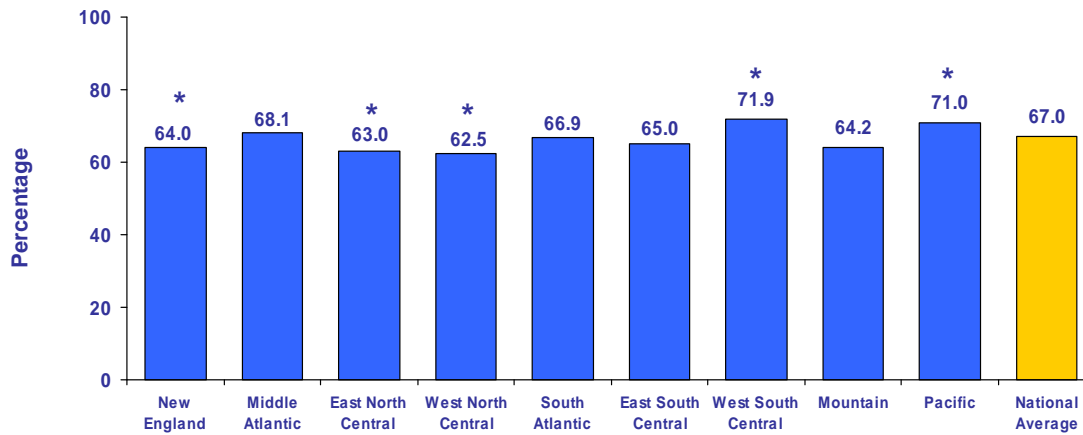
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AHRQ welcomes questions and comments from readers of this publication who are interested in obtaining more information about access, cost, use, financing, and quality of health care in the United States. We also invite you to tell us how you are using this Statistical Brief and other MEPS data and tools and to share suggestions on how MEPS products might be enhanced to further meet your needs. Please e-mail us at MEPSProjectDirector@ahrq.hhs.gov or send a letter to the address below:

Steven B. Cohen, PhD, Director
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Rockville, MD 20850



Figure 1. Percentage of all state and local government employees who were enrolled in employer-sponsored health insurance, by census division, 2010

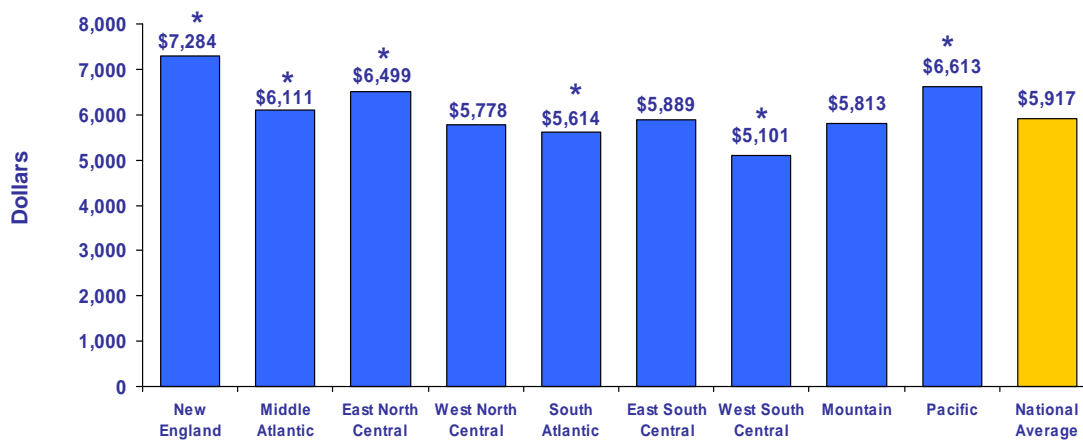


**Statistically different from the national average at the 0.05 level.*

Source: Center for Financing, Access, and Cost Trends, AHRQ, Insurance Component of the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey, 2010



Figure 2. Average single premium per enrolled employee at state and local governments, by census division, 2010

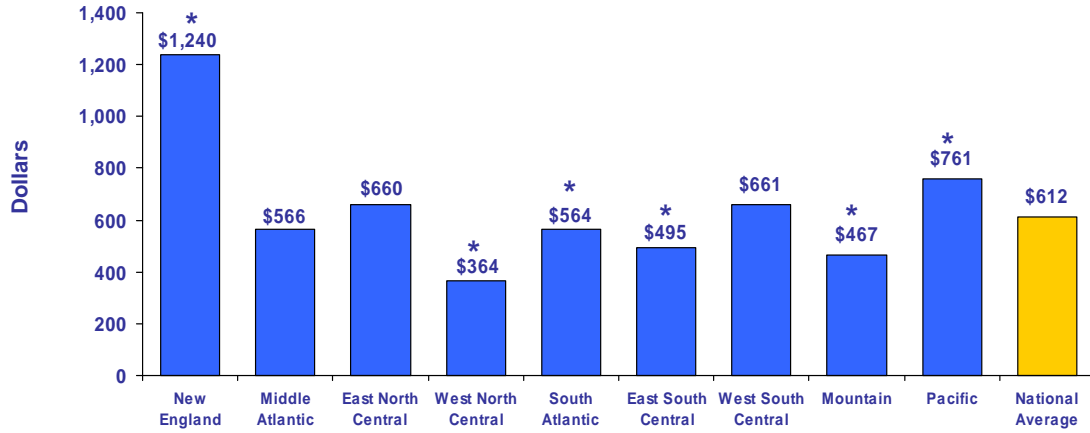


**Statistically different from the national average at the 0.05 level.*

Source: Center for Financing, Access, and Cost Trends, AHRQ, Insurance Component of the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey, 2010



Figure 3. Average employee contribution per enrolled employee for single coverage at state and local governments, by census division, 2010

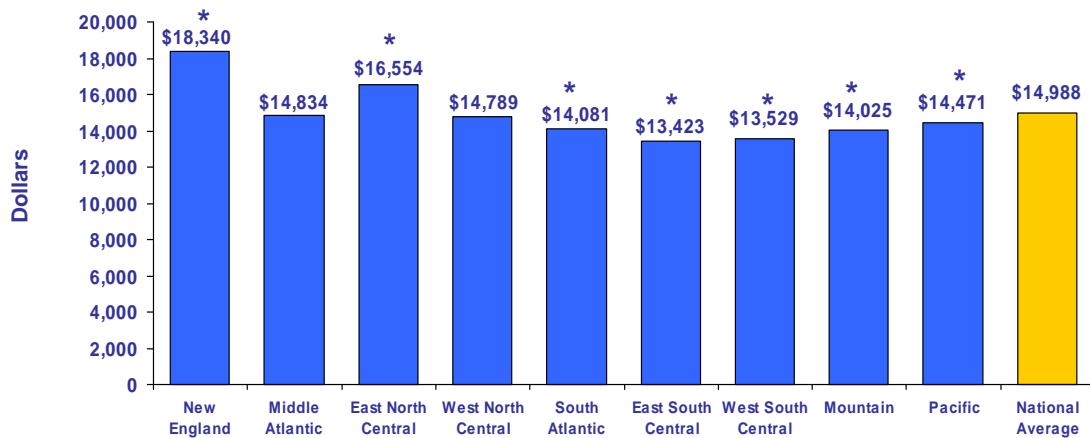


*Statistically different from the national average at the 0.05 level.

Source: Center for Financing, Access, and Cost Trends, AHRQ, Insurance Component of the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey, 2010



Figure 4. Average family premium per enrolled employee at state and local governments, by census division, 2010

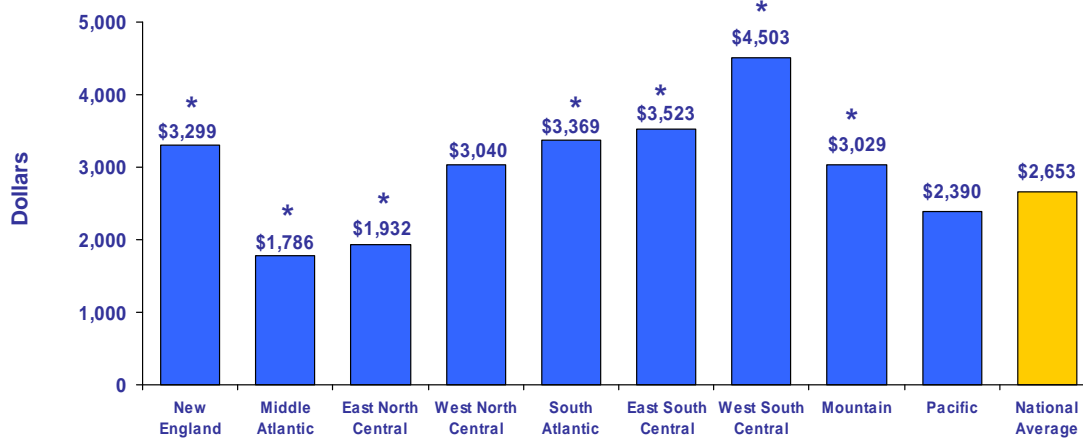


*Statistically different from the national average at the 0.05 level.

Source: Center for Financing, Access, and Cost Trends, AHRQ, Insurance Component of the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey, 2010



Figure 5. Average employee contribution per enrolled employee for family coverage at state and local governments, by census division, 2010



**Statistically different from the national average at the 0.05 level.*

Source: Center for Financing, Access, and Cost Trends, AHRQ, Insurance Component of the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey, 2010