

MEPS-IC Employer Survey Description

The MEPS-IC is a large state and nationally representative employer survey conducted by the Census Bureau for the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ). The survey collects detailed information from public and private employers on health insurance offer and take-up rates, costs of premiums (including employer contributions), and general employer characteristics. The information on coverage is presented from the employer perspective and does not include information on the distribution of coverage for a state's population nor an estimate of its uninsurance rate. AHRQ publishes the direct state estimates in tabular form on an annual basis. The SPG researcher and analytic team are working in collaboration with AHRQ analysts to conduct Virginia analyses of the MEPS-IC data that adheres to Census data access guidelines and which will include sub-state analyses for the five SPG regions.

MEPS-IC contains aggregate information that local decision-makers can use to support policy and program choices based on information including, insurance offer and take up rates by firm size, average wage, and type of industry. In keeping with the SPG regional strategic planning framework, state and regional leaders can use this information for sub-state regional planning. The regional-level analyses and information are derived from a model-based approach conducted to estimate employer coverage rates for a specific area by coupling the data with additional information on employer characteristics. For example, one could examine the relationship between the likelihood of offering coverage based on MEPS-IC dataset at the statewide level and regional levels by employee-specific variables, such as wage or firm size. The resulting ratio could be used to estimate coverage rates as a function of either wage or firm size. The statewide

and sub-state level information – scheduled for collection in March 2005 and expected distribution by June 2005 -- thus supports the choice of available health care coverage expansion options. For further details visit www.meps.gov.