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**STUDY SHOWS ONE IN THREE WORKING HISPANICS HAVE NO
HEALTH COVERAGE, SUFFER HEALTH GAPS AS A RESULT**

'Cover the Uninsured Week' Highlights How Being Uninsured Affects Hispanic Americans

Washington, DC, May 10, 2004 – While many people assume that having a job also means having health insurance, a new report shows that one in three working Hispanic adults are uninsured. The report further reveals that Hispanic adults who do not have health insurance experience significant gaps in medical care, when compared to Hispanic adults with coverage.

While no demographic or ethnic group is immune to the struggle of going without health insurance, working Hispanics are more likely to be without health coverage than working Americans in any other ethnic community. About 35 percent of Hispanic adults with jobs are uninsured, compared to 18 percent of employed African Americans and 11 percent of working white adults.

The report was prepared by researchers at the State Health Access Data Assistance Center, located at the University of Minnesota, for The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the nation's largest philanthropy dedicated exclusively to improving the health and health care of all Americans. The report is being released as part of *Cover the Uninsured Week*, May 10-16, 2004 – the largest mobilization in history to promote health coverage for all Americans, including Hispanic and Latino Americans. This nonpartisan effort is co-chaired by Presidents Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter and is endorsed by nine former U.S. Surgeons General and U.S. Secretaries of Health and Human Services, appointed by both Republican and Democratic presidents, including former U.S. Surgeon General Antonio Novello.

More than 800 organizations are joining the National Council of La Raza, the National Alliance for Hispanic Health and some of the most influential organizations in the United States to encourage Americans nationwide to speak out about this growing problem.

"Across the nation, the number of uninsured Americans is on the rise, but Hispanic Americans are affected more than any other ethnic group by the lack of health insurance," said Risa Lavizzo-Mourey, M.D., M.B.A., president and CEO of The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. "These are men and women who work hard to support their families, but either are not offered insurance by their employers or cannot afford the coverage that is offered. We must find a way to solve this problem and make health benefits affordable for all business owners and their employees."

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The report also finds that uninsured Hispanics are forced to go without medical care when it's needed. Findings among surveyed adults ages 18-64 include:

- **Uninsured Hispanic adults are less likely to get the medical care they need.** Nationally, nearly 17 percent of uninsured Hispanic adults report being unable to get needed medical care in the past 12 months, compared to 7 percent of Hispanic adults with health insurance.
- **Uninsured Hispanics are even less likely than uninsured non-Hispanic whites to have a personal doctor or health care provider.** Nationally, almost 70 percent of Hispanic adults without health insurance say they do not have a personal doctor or health care provider, compared with 48 percent of uninsured white adults and 25 percent of insured Hispanic adults.
- **Hispanics who are uninsured are less likely to receive preventive services.** Nearly 40 percent of all uninsured Hispanic women who are the appropriate age for mammograms, as directed by CDC guidelines, say they do not have them in the recommended time frame, compared to 24 percent of insured Hispanic women. Seventy-three percent of uninsured Hispanic men who are the appropriate age for prostate cancer screenings, as directed by CDC guidelines, report not having them in the recommended time frame, compared with 53 percent of insured Hispanic men.
- **Hispanics who are uninsured are more likely to report being in poor or fair health than individuals who are insured.** Almost 30 percent of uninsured Hispanic adults say their health is fair or poor, compared to almost 18 percent of insured Hispanic adults.

The report uses data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's 2002 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey (BRFSS). The BRFSS is a national telephone survey of preventive and health risk behaviors. It is administered in all 50 states, D.C., Guam, the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico to adults 18 years of age and older.

"Hispanics are more likely than members of any other ethnic group to be uninsured," said Marcela Urrutia, senior health policy analyst for the National Council of La Raza. "Hispanics who don't have insurance are forced to go without care even when it is needed, and minor illnesses become major ones because care is delayed. It's a fact that uninsured patients live sicker and die younger. That's why we all need to work together to stop this cycle."

During *Cover the Uninsured Week*, more than 2,000 events will take place in communities from coast to coast to highlight the growing number of uninsured Americans and encourage solutions. In addition to campus panel discussions, interfaith prayer breakfasts and seminars aimed at helping small business owners find affordable coverage options for their employees, more than 500 health and enrollment fairs will be held, including:

- In Dallas, local organizers and volunteers will hold a Health and Enrollment Fair on May 10 at Los Barrios Unidos Community Clinic where families can receive free health screenings, including glaucoma tests and blood pressure checks. Information on receiving free access to services at the clinic will also be available.

- In the Los Angeles area, there will be a series of health fairs called "A Su Salud/To Your Health" that are focused on the Latino community. At these health fairs, consumers register and follow a series of stations that, at the end, give them a Health Risk Assessment. The fairs also connect consumers to medical facilities in their neighborhood and assist them with enrollment in existing state and county sponsored health coverage programs. Free screenings will be available for blood pressure, glucose/diabetes, cholesterol, women's health (referrals for free Pap tests and mammograms), PSA (Prostate Screening Antigen), vision/optometry, dental hygiene, immunizations and bone density.
- In the New York City area, organizers in Jamaica, Queens will hold a Family Health Day where free health screenings will be offered to uninsured families. Information on smoking cessation, health insurance enrollment, how to see a doctor even if you do not have insurance and nutrition and exercise will be available. There will also be free gifts and a raffle.

Cover the Uninsured Week, working with Families USA, a national nonprofit, nonpartisan health care consumer advocacy organization, developed a resource guide in Spanish and English that describes help that may be available to people who do not have health coverage. The guide contains information on free or low-cost health insurance programs, community health centers, free clinics and pharmaceutical assistance programs. The guide will be available at all fairs. In addition, the guide can be obtained by calling a toll-free telephone information number – 1-888-538-4371. The phone line works in Spanish and English.

In addition to The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the National Council of La Raza, *Cover the Uninsured Week* is being organized by a diverse group representing some of the most influential organizations in the United States: the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, AFL-CIO, Service Employees International Union, Healthcare Leadership Council, American Medical Association, National Medical Association, American Nurses Association, Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association, America's Health Insurance Plans, American Hospital Association, Federation of American Hospitals, Catholic Health Association of the United States, Families USA, AARP, The United Way of America, The California Endowment and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

An easy-to-understand guide, "Health Care Coverage in America: Understanding the Issues and Proposed Solutions" has also been prepared to help people understand this complex issue and learn more about proposed solutions. To download the guide, find local events, learn how to get involved or to locate resources for the uninsured, log on to www.CovertheUninsuredWeek.org. The Web site is also available in Spanish at <http://CovertheUninsuredWeek.org/espanol/>.

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