

# EXTENDING HEALTH COVERAGE TO ARKANSAS WORKERS

## WHICH INDUSTRIES BENEFIT THE MOST?

Brett Kincaid, Outreach Director

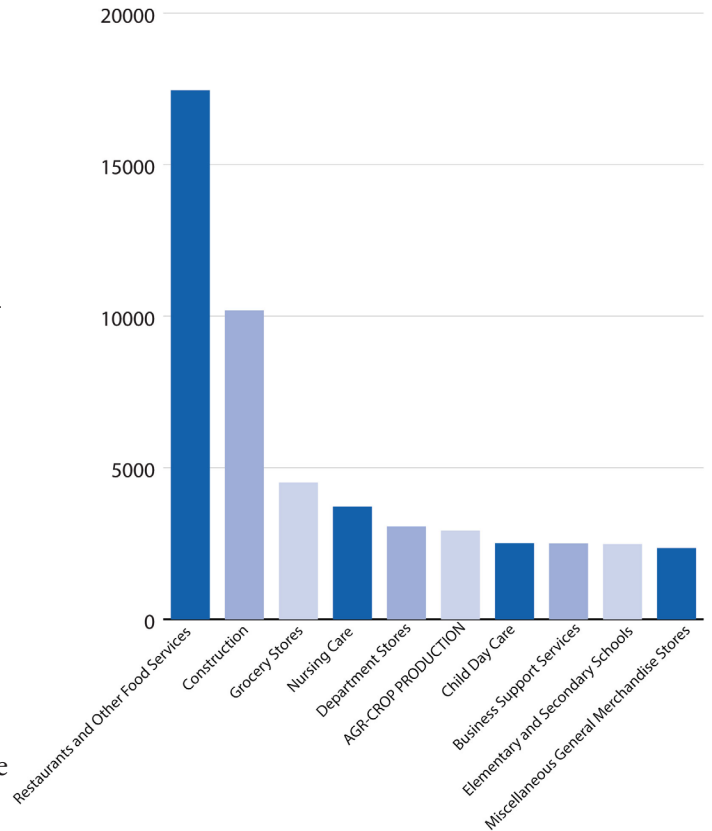
Kim Reeve, Senior Policy Analyst

Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families

The 89th General Assembly faces a clear choice this year: deny coverage to more than 250,000 Arkansans who qualify for Medicaid services or allow all Arkansans access to coverage they deserve. Right now, the only way working Arkansans qualify for Medicaid is if they are very low-income parents or disabled workers. The only exception is for expectant mothers, who return to ineligible status once their child is born. These Arkansans work and pay taxes. They live next door. They watch our children, work in our restaurants, and produce and sell Arkansas-made goods. Sadly, one minor medical emergency could break these families.

We all live in Arkansas because we believe it's one of the best places in America to live, work, and raise a family. If we want to make it even better, we need to show the nation that we care about having a healthy workforce. The good news is that the Arkansas legislature has the power to do just that by voting to stabilize our workforce and strengthen our state's budget for years to come.

INDUSTRIES WITH THE MOST LOW-INCOME UNINSURED WORKERS

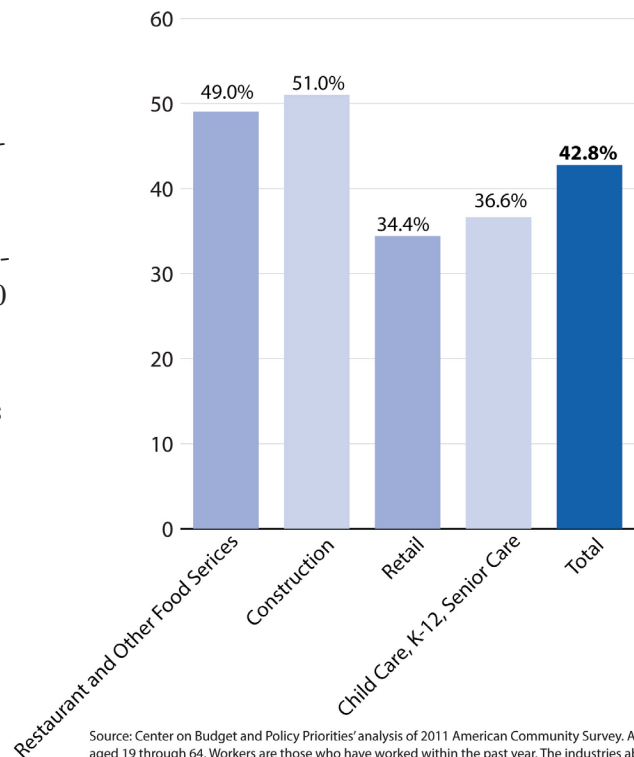


Source: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities' analysis of 2011 American Community Survey. Adults are those aged 19 through 64. Workers are those who have worked within the past year. The ten industries above are those with the largest number of uninsured citizen workers in the Medicaid expansion income-eligibility range in Arkansas. All figures are rounded to the nearest ten workers.

## ARKANSAS WORKERS LACK COVERAGE AT ALARMINGLY HIGH RATE

Under federal law, a family of four who earns about \$32,000 will be eligible for Medicaid next year. In Arkansas, however, these working adults remain ineligible in almost every case because the state has not extended Medicaid coverage to these workers. According to an analysis of the most recent census numbers – conducted by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities for Arkansas Advocates for Children & Families (AACF) – well over 150,000 Arkansans who work, meet the federal standard, and do not have insurance will qualify for Medicaid under the new federal guidelines. Until the state legislature approves extending Medicaid – an idea supported by a growing list of health care professionals and Governor Mike Beebe – these people will remain without health coverage and few, if any, affordable options. That means they live and work knowing that they are one illness or injury away from potentially losing their jobs, their savings, and their hope.

RATE OF UNINSURED BY EMPLOYMENT SECTOR



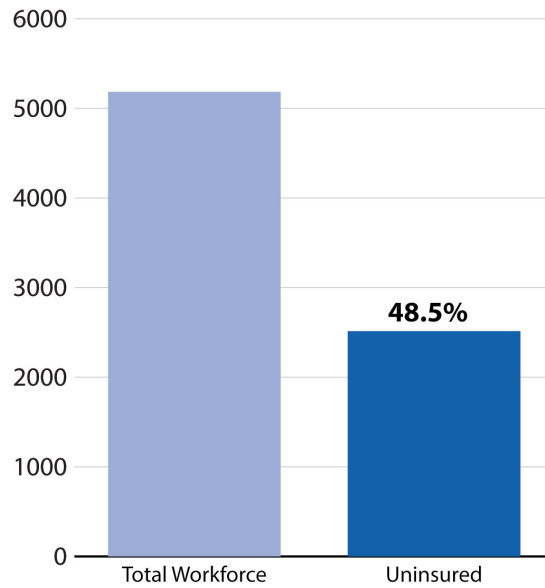
Source: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities' analysis of 2011 American Community Survey. Adults are those aged 19 through 64. Workers are those who have worked within the past year. The industries above are those with the largest number of uninsured citizen workers in the Medicaid expansion income-eligibility range in Arkansas. All figures are rounded to the nearest ten workers.

Particularly troubling, many of these workers come from service industries and professions that take care of others. From restaurant workers to construction professionals to the selfless men and women that care for our children and seniors, tens of thousands of Arkansans work every day without the benefit of health care coverage. Many of the jobs are in industries such as restaurants/food services, child care, and retail stores that pay relatively low wages, making it virtually impossible for families to afford health care coverage. Of the workers who qualify for Medicaid but cannot get it in Arkansas, almost one-third of them work in one of those three sectors alone.

Almost half of all child care workers qualify under the new federal Medicaid guidelines but will remain uncovered unless the legislature acts. Every time you take your child or grandchild to day care, remember that half of everyone you say “Hello” to in the hallway likely lack health insurance. We need to make sure the people that care for our children are cared for themselves.

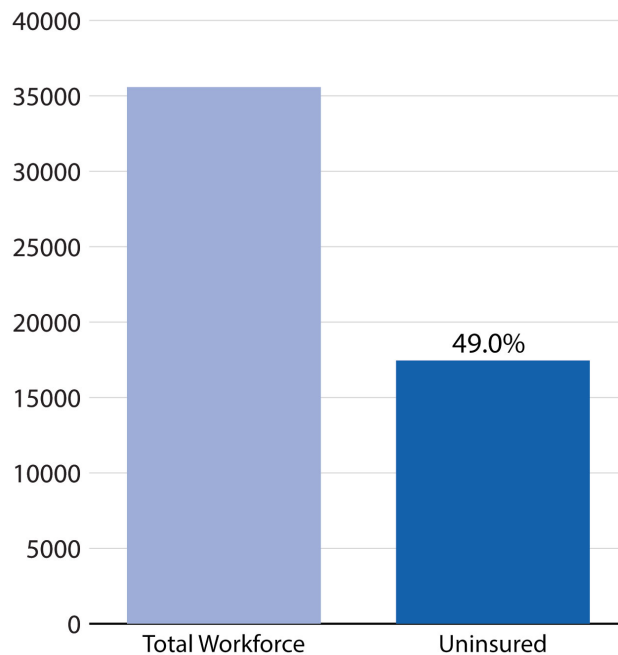
Virtually half of the more than 35,000 workers in the food service industry do not have insurance. This includes servers, cooks, and general support staff. This is an employment sector heavily populated by single mothers. Restaurant servers often do not have the luxury of vacation days, meaning they need to work in order to make money. Any significant illness or injury means a double-whammy for these workers, costing them expensive medical bills and lost wages. Health coverage with access to preventive care helps these workers and our overall economy.

### LOW-INCOME UNINSURED WORKERS IN THE CHILDCARE INDUSTRY



Source: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities’ analysis of 2011 American Community Survey. Adults are those aged 19 through 64. Workers are those who have worked within the past year. The industry above is one of the industries with the largest number of uninsured citizen workers in the Medicaid expansion income-eligibility range in Arkansas. All figures are rounded to the nearest ten workers.

### LOW-INCOME UNINSURED WORKERS IN THE RESTAURANT AND OTHER FOOD SERVICES INDUSTRIES



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