



CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS
WITH DISABILITIES

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES WHO HAVE NO HEALTH INSURANCE ARE AT RISK OF SECONDARY DISABLING CONDITIONS

There are many people with disability who do not have health insurance from employers, Social Security or Supplemental Security Income. Lack of timely health care for this population can lead to the development of secondary disabling conditions.

A forum was held by the Bureau of Labor Statistics on “Measuring Employment Status of Persons with Disabilities in the CPS.” During the forum, a report was presented by the Assistant Commissioner for Current Employment Analysis. Disability advocates and experts on Department of Labor employment statistics participated in a question and answer session.

Summary

There was a presentation on the development of an instrument to measure the employment of people with disabilities. The Bureau of Labor Statistics’ (BLS) instrument had high validity because the measure of disability conformed to the disability definition of the Americans with Disabilities Act. There are applied functional measures of both physical and mental impairment associated with the instrument, which also collects socially relevant information associated with employment. In addition, the BLS survey instrument on disability prevalence can be validated by other surveys.

Disability Prevention Issue

The prevalence of people with disabilities of working age without health insurance is a public health concern. Health insurance, for many, is linked to employment. Lack of timely health care for people with disability can further diminish health and may contribute to secondary disabling conditions. Extrapolated BLS survey data on disability prevalence indicates that there are potentially 15 million people with disabilities who don’t have health insurance (i.e. disability working age prevalence minus enrollment in SSI and SSDI). In addition, employment population ratios for full-time disability workers who work all of the time was less than 10%, and 40% to 65% of people with disability who are working do so at sub-poverty wages. It is likely that most of this cohort does not have health insurance.

Intervention

Comment on the validity of the information contained in the report and suggest a supplementary project.

Recommendation

There should be a supplementary employment project undertaken at BLS to determine prevalence of health insurance coverage for people with disability through employment.