

DECADES

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Trends in Health



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Q: What were the most interesting and important trends in Arizona health that occurred in the previous decade? What is the significance of these trends and what insights can we apply to the new decade?

A: During the previous decade Arizona experienced a dramatic increase in the number of people receiving health insurance coverage through the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS). Consider this. In 1990, 9% of Arizona's population was enrolled in AHCCCS and by 2000 that figure had increased only slightly to 10%. However, by 2008 that figure had already spiked to 17%. Although the recession accounts for significant growth in the past two years, a 26.6% increase from December 2007 to December 2009, AHCCCS enrollment was high even during a period of explosive growth and relative economic prosperity. If criteria for AHCCCS eligibility don't change, it is unlikely that this trend will be reversed in the coming decade.

Perhaps national health care reform will address the demand for affordable or subsidized health insurance, but until that debate is resolved Arizona must be prepared to meet the growing need for AHCCCS services.

On a more positive note, two indicators of preventative health behavior have shown significant improvement during the past decade. According to America's Health Rankings, during the previous ten years complete immunization coverage in Arizona increased from 51% to 79% of children ages 19 to 35 months. And, the prevalence of smoking has decreased notably from 20.1% of the population in 2000 to 15.9% in 2009. I am optimistic that these trends will continue in the new decade.

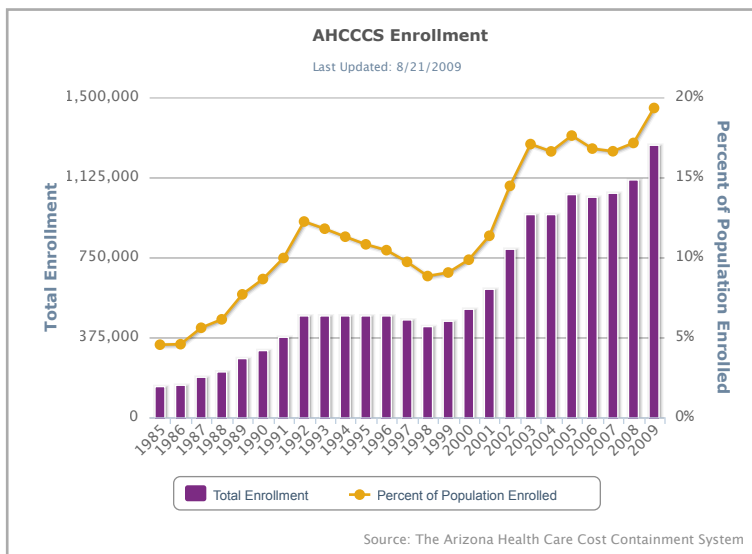


Figure 1: Enrollment in AHCCCS has increased dramatically over the last decade.



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Arizona Indicators is an online information resource and analysis tool that centralizes data about the state and its communities. Arizona Indicators presents interactive visualizations, clear data descriptions, and public opinion data in a broad range of content areas.

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