

## Data Summary

### Selected Results from the North Carolina Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) for Medicaid Recipients Compared to All North Carolina Adult Survey Respondents: January through December 2005 Surveys

In the 2005 BRFSS survey, for those respondents who reported that they did have health insurance coverage, the following question was asked: “What is your primary health insurance plan? This is the plan which pays the medical bills first or pays most of the medical bills.” If the adult respondent chose “Medicaid or Carolina ACCESS,” then they are counted as “Medicaid” for purposes of this report. BRFSS results for Medicaid recipients are compared to the results for all North Carolina adult BRFSS respondents.

Out of a total of 17,261 BRFSS respondents during January-December 2005, 612 or 3.3% indicated that Medicaid was their primary health insurance plan. The percentage of 3.3% is a weighted percentage, designed to represent the entire population of North Carolina, and thus cannot be calculated directly from the numbers of survey respondents in the table. This percentage is substantially lower than the percentage of the total population of the state who are Medicaid recipients, due to several factors: 1) the BRFSS survey is conducted only for persons age 18 and older, while the majority of Medicaid recipients in North Carolina are under the age of 18 or in institutions and are therefore not surveyed; 2) a higher proportion of Medicaid recipients do not have telephones and therefore are not available to complete the BRFSS survey; and 3) low-income persons with telephones may be more likely than others not to respond to the survey for various reasons.

The 612 Medicaid BRFSS respondents for 2005 is a small number on which to calculate percentages and other statistics, so the data in the attached report should be interpreted with caution.

The following bullets indicate some of the highlights of the attached data tables:

- While Medicaid recipients represent approximately 13 percent of the total North Carolina population, they comprise only 3.3 percent of BRFSS respondents and thus are substantially underrepresented in the BRFSS survey.
- Compared to all BRFSS respondents, the Medicaid respondents are substantially more likely to be female, African American, young, never married, unemployed, and of lower household income. This is understandable since a major reason that people qualify for Medicaid is low income.
- Compared to all BRFSS respondents, the Medicaid respondents are much more likely to report that they are in fair or poor health, that they had 8 or more days in the past month when their physical health was not good, that they had 8 or more days in the past month when their mental health was not good, that they were ever told by a doctor that they had diabetes, arthritis, or asthma, that they were a current smoker, that they did not engage in any leisure time physical activity, that they were obese, and that they had a disability. These results are consistent with the facts that people of lower socioeconomic status are generally in poorer health, and that many people qualify for Medicaid after they become sick or disabled.
- Compared to all BRFSS respondents, the Medicaid respondents were more likely to report they had had a routine health checkup in the last year. This indicates that Medicaid coverage may help increase access to health care services.