

# Health Policy and the Pandemic: Lessons from History

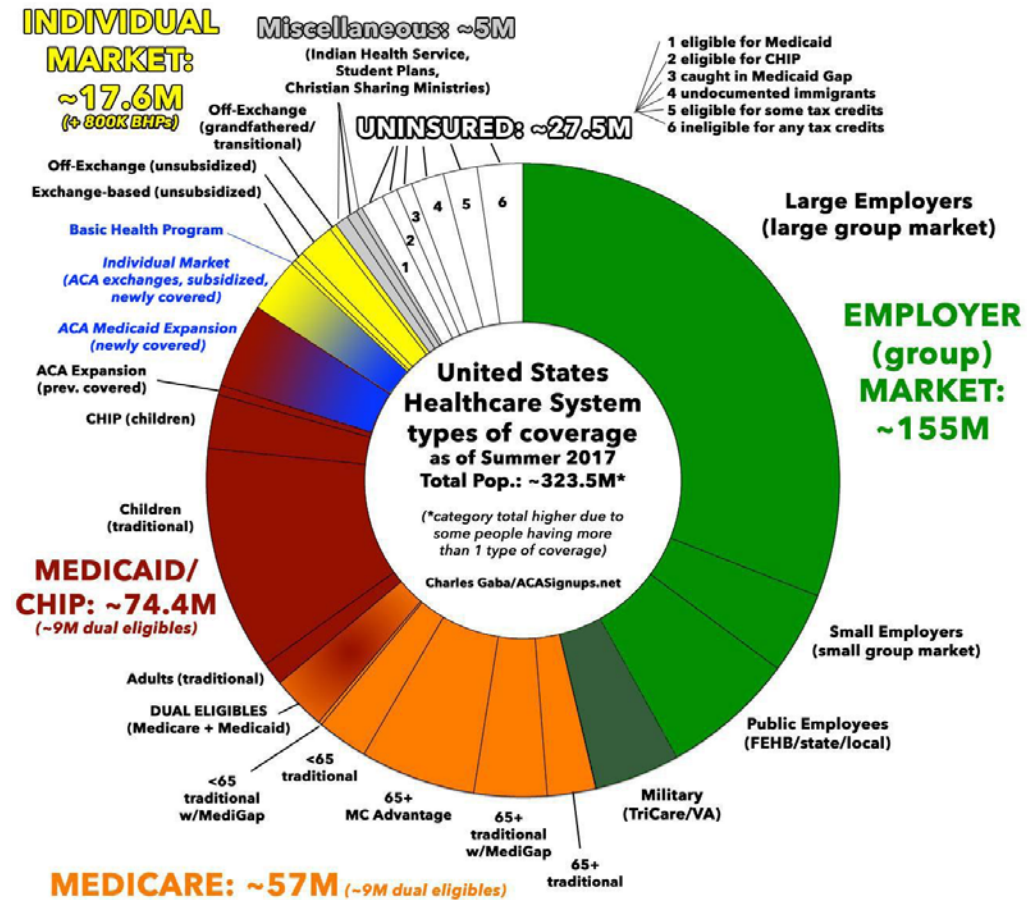
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Associate Professor of History and Medicine

University of Rochester

# Employer Sponsored Health Insurance

# How Americans Access Health Insurance and why it Matters



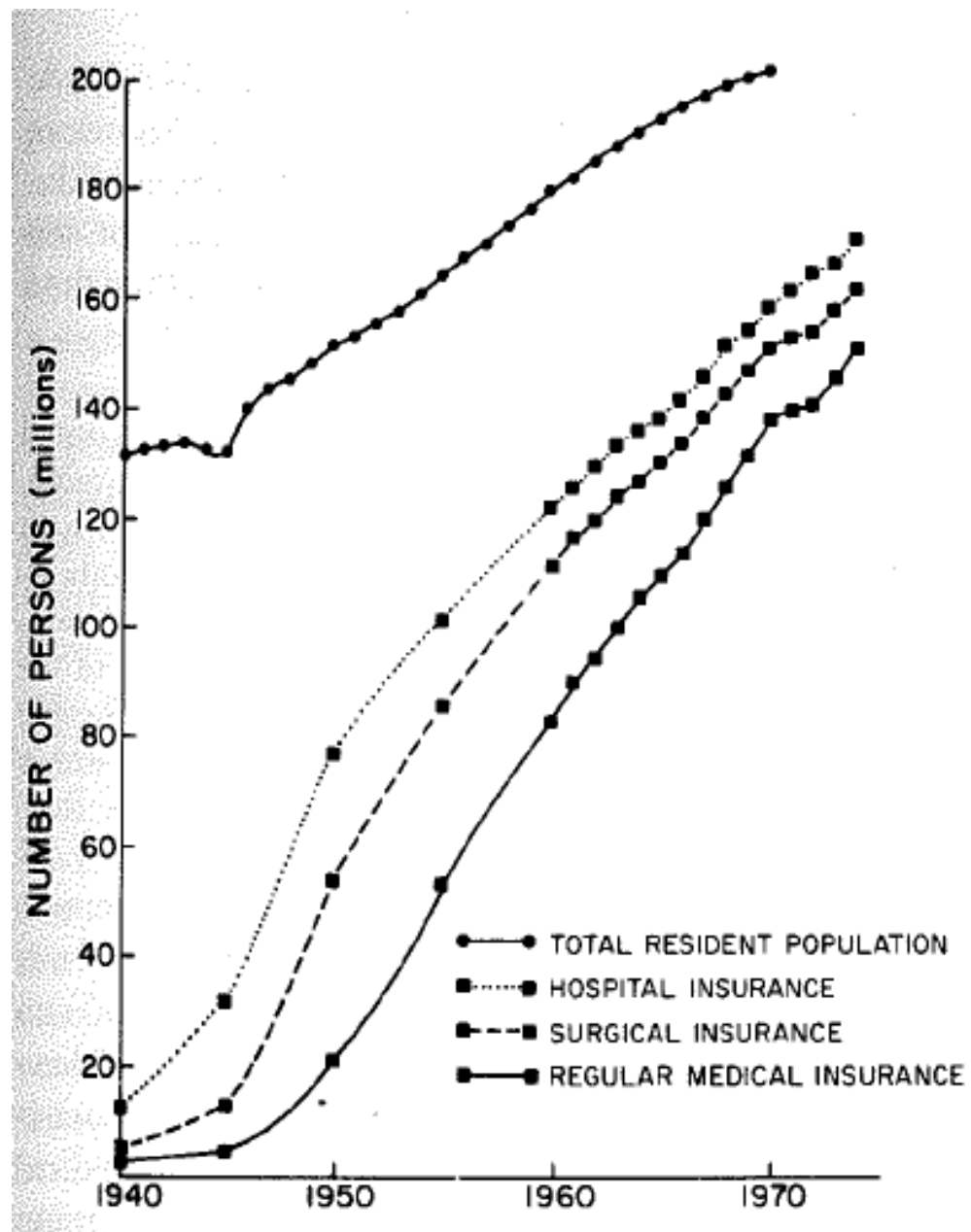
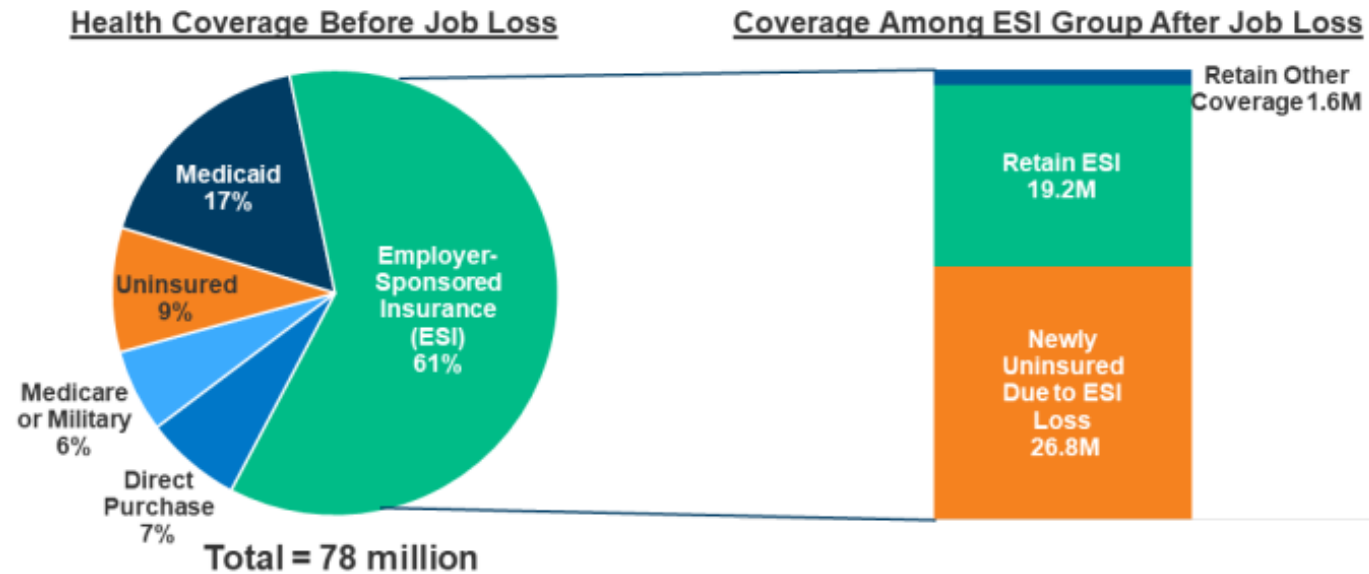


Figure 1

## Health Insurance Coverage Before and After Job Loss Among People in a Family Experiencing Job Loss as of May 2, 2020



Notes: "Retain Other Coverage" refers to individuals holding multiple sources of coverage prior to family job loss.

"Retain ESI" refers to individuals in families with multiple workers accessing ESI through separate employment-based policies.

Source: KFF. Job Losses occurred March 1<sup>st</sup> through May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020. See Methods for more details.

# Making the Invisible Visible

- Chronic disease, health disparities, poverty

# Azar lays part of blame for Covid-19 death toll on state of Americans' health



By [Kristen Holmes](#) and [Kevin Bohn](#), CNN

Updated 7:13 PM ET, Sun May 17, 2020



## MORE FROM CNN



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The comfiest



“US is a population with significant unhealthy comorbidities that do make many individuals in our communities, in particular African American, minority communities particularly at risk here because of significant underlying disease health disparities and disease comorbidities -- and that is an unfortunate legacy in our health care system that we certainly do need to address,”  
“If we have hypertension, if we have diabetes, we present with greater risk of severe complications”

CDC's National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (NCCDPHP)

# CHRONIC DISEASES IN AMERICA

6 IN 10

Adults in the US  
have a **chronic disease**



4 IN 10

Adults in the US  
have **two or more**

THE LEADING CAUSES OF DEATH AND DISABILITY  
and Leading Drivers of the Nation's **\$3.5 Trillion** in Annual Health Care Costs





National

# ‘This feels great’

A preview from Georgia about how America might reemerge from the coronavirus: Eating, drinking, touching and throwing caution to the wind

Wash Post May 17, 2020

“I’m getting my nails done tomorrow — screw it,” said a nurse drinking a glass of wine on a bench after work, as the order of the morning was collapsing into the results of a thousand individual decisions.

On the sprawling green plaza, people began gathering elbow-to-elbow on blankets and lawn chairs, opening beers and bottles of wine.

“I think you have to live life,” said Jeff Lampel, taking a sip of beer.

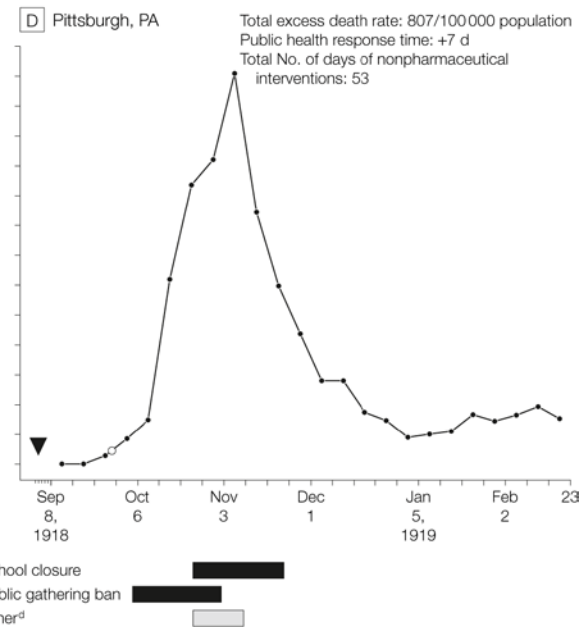
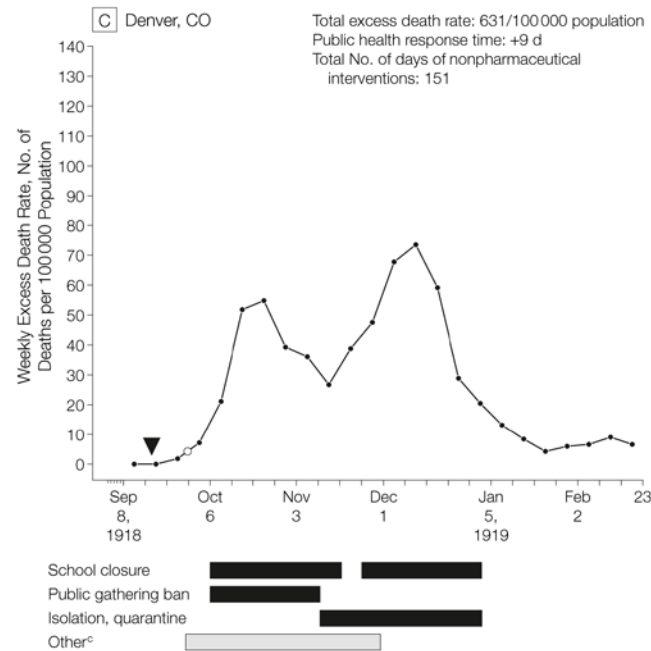
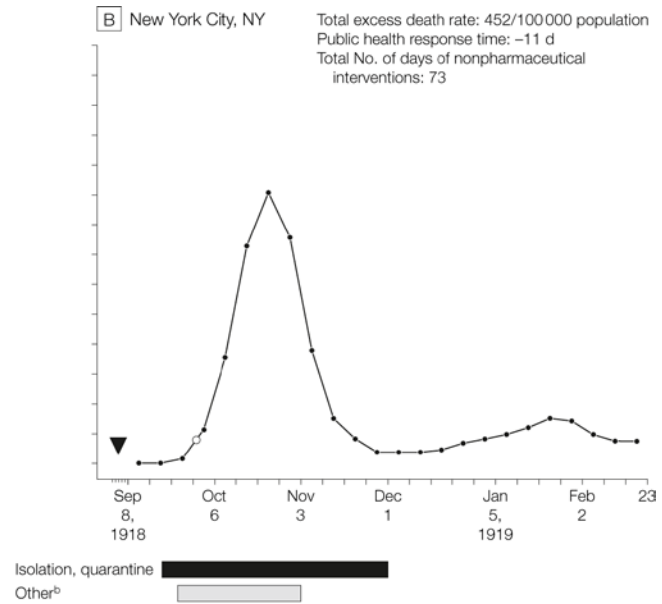
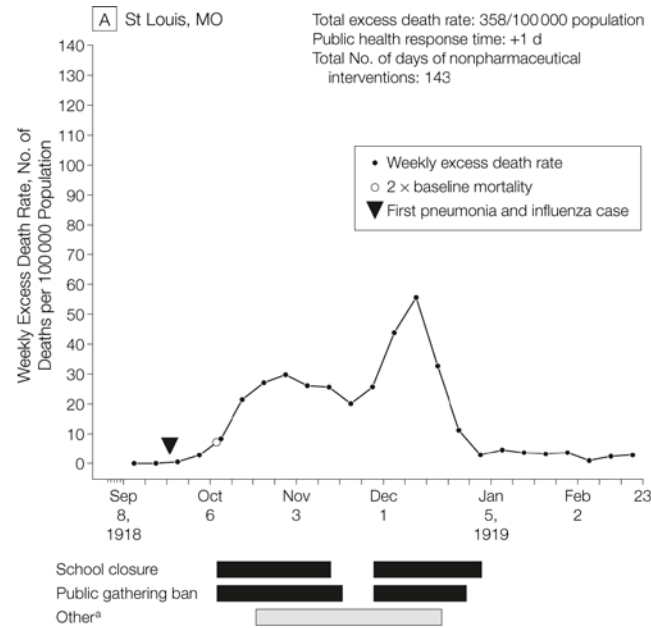
“When you start seeing where the cases are coming from and the demographics — I’m not worried,” agreed his friend Scott Friedel.

“I know what people are going to say — ‘Those selfish idiots are killing our old people!’ ” said Lampel.

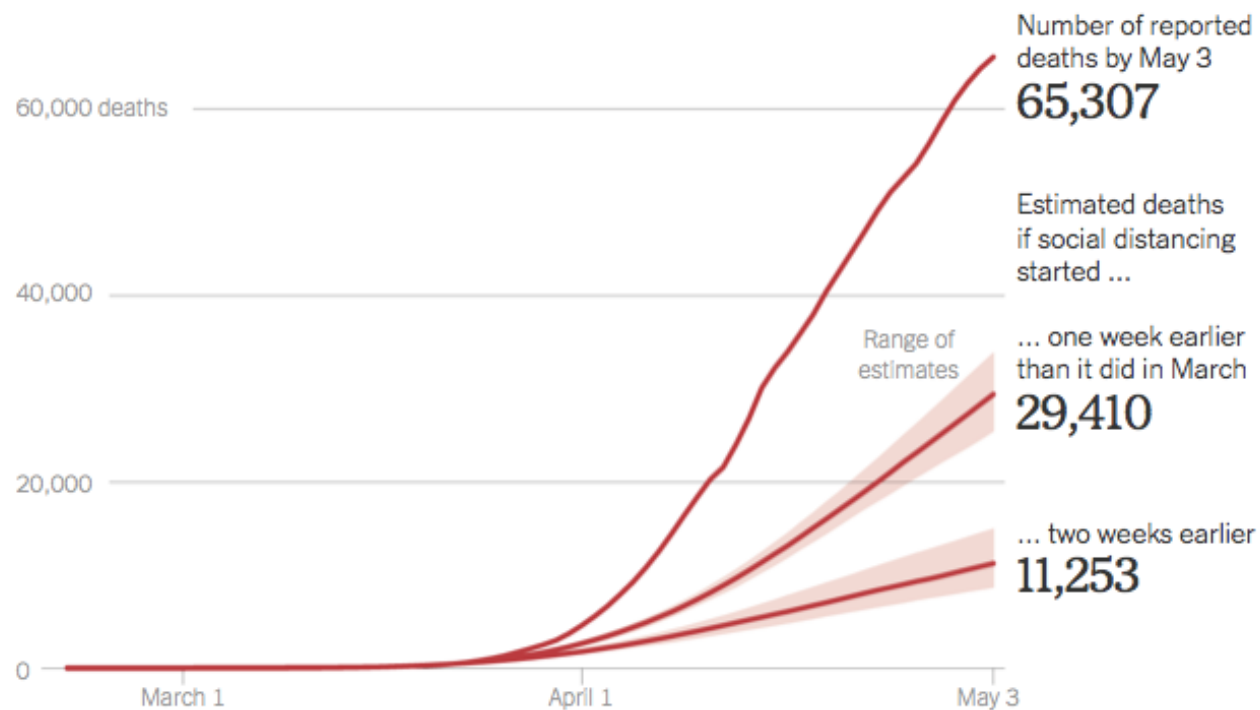
“How do you give up a day like this — really, how?” Friedel said, enjoying the last rays of sun as the music kept playing and the crowds kept coming.

Big problems – but sometimes simpler solutions

Markel H,  
 Lipman HB,  
 Navarro JA, et  
 al.  
 Nonpharmaceu  
 tical  
 Interventions  
 Implemented  
 by US Cities  
 During the  
 1918-1919  
 Influenza  
 Pandemic. *JAM*  
*A.* 2007;298(6):  
 644–654.  
 doi:10.1001/ja  
 ma.298.6.644



## How Earlier Control Measures Could Have Saved Lives



By Weiyi Cai - Source: "Differential Effects of Intervention Timing on COVID-19 Spread in the United States," by Sen Pei, Sasikiran Kandula and Jeffrey Shaman, Columbia University

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/20/us/coronavirus-distancing-deaths.html>

