



Access to

Health Care

Access to quality, timely, and appropriate medical care is an important determinant of health. Factors that impede access to health care include lack of health insurance coverage and lack of a regular source of health care. Other important barriers include language and cultural differences between patients and providers, transportation problems, difficulty scheduling appointments, and limited ability to pay for health-related expenses.

Health Insurance & Health Care Services

Health insurance coverage is an important determinant of access to health care. Persons without either private or public health insurance coverage are less likely to have a regular source of care, are more likely to report an unmet need for health care and are less likely to receive preventive health care services.^{1,2} The HP2000 goal is for no one under the age of 65 to be without health insurance.

Nearly 2 million adults between the ages of 18 and 64 in Los Angeles County do not have health insurance. In addition, there are an estimated 696,000 uninsured children in the county, or one fourth of all children under 18. Because the majority of uninsured people are also poor, they are less likely to have the ability to pay for services. In particular, individuals without health insurance may not obtain the recommended preventive health services to maintain good health.

Having a regular source of health care is associated with lower rates of hospitalization for selected chronic medical conditions and with greater use of preventive health services. Uninsured individuals are less likely to have a regular source of care than insured individuals.

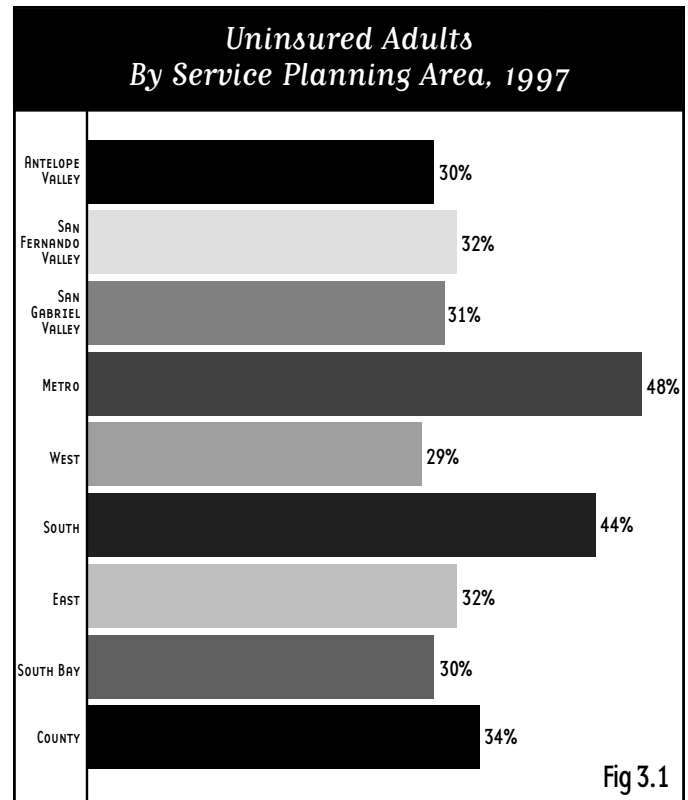


Fig 3.1

• Adults age 18–64 years

WHAT DID THE SURVEY MEASURE?

Health Insurance Status

Any form of health insurance which pays for health care.

Regular Source of Care

Place/provider where respondent usually goes for primary health care services.

Preventive Health Services

Receipt of age- and risk-appropriate screening for cervical, breast, and prostate cancer in the past two years.

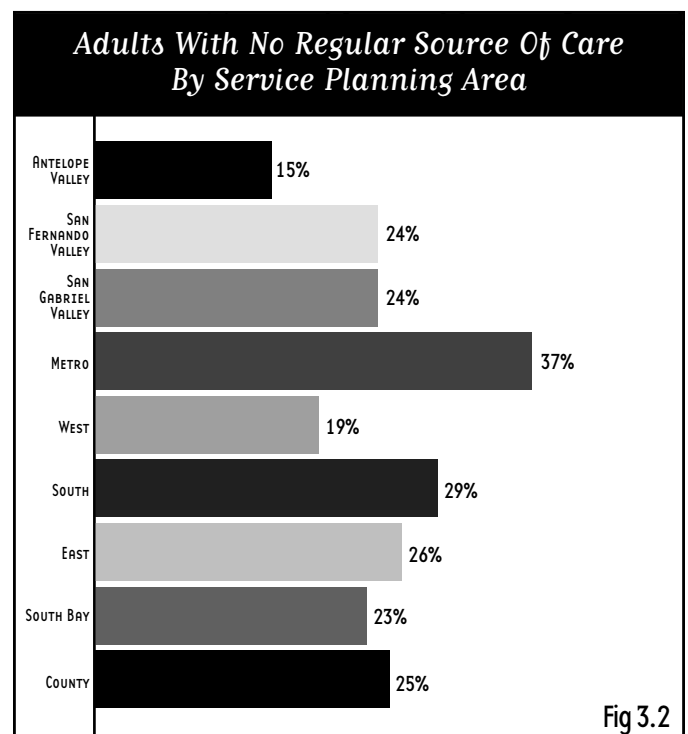
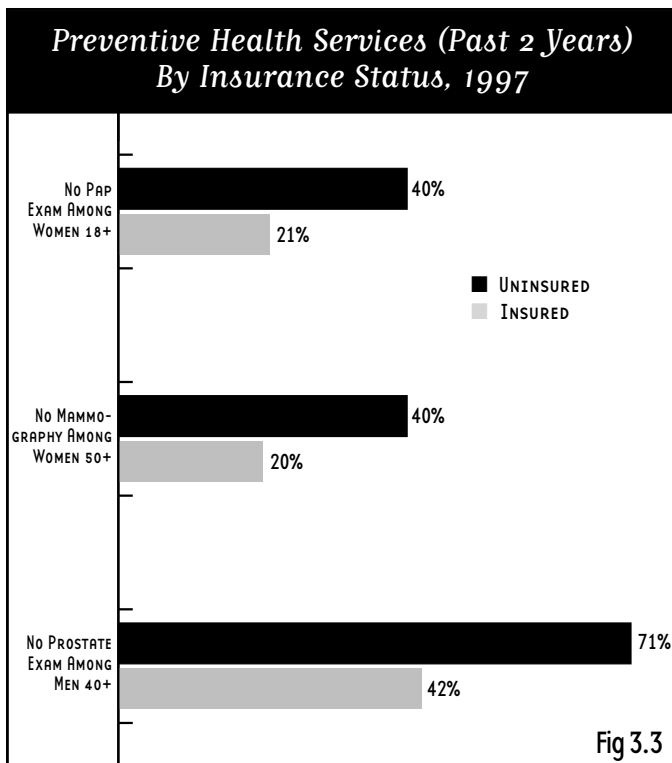


Fig 3.2

1. Bloom B, Simpson G, Cohen RA, Parson PE. Access to health care. Part 2: Working-age adults. National Center for Health Statistics. Vital Health Stat 1997;10(197).
 2. Makuc DM, Freid VM, Parsons PE. Health insurance and cancer screening among women. Advance data from vital and health statistics; no 254. National Center for Health Statistics. 1994.



FINDINGS ABOUT HEALTH INSURANCE

Adults:

- Thirty-four percent of adults ages 18–64 in Los Angeles County do not have health insurance (approximately 2 million adults).
- Latinos (46%) and Asians (35%) have the highest percentages of uninsured non-elderly adults. Percentages of uninsured are lower among African-Americans (26%) and whites (24%).
- The percentage of uninsured adults is highest in the age group 18–29 years; young adults comprise over half of the uninsured in Los Angeles County.
- Sixty percent of uninsured adults, nearly 1.2 million people in Los Angeles County are medically indigent (uninsured and living in households with incomes below 200% of the federal poverty level).
- Fifty-four percent of adults with less than a high school education are uninsured compared to 23% of college graduates.

Regular Source of Care

- More males (30%) than females (21%) do not have a regular source of care.
- Latinos (36%) make up the highest percentage of adults lacking a regular source of care, followed by Asians (30%), whites (17%) and African-Americans (17%).
- Percentages of adults without a regular source of care decreases with advancing age, from 39% in 18–29 year olds to 12% in fifty years and older.
- The percentage of adults lacking a regular source of care is higher in persons with less than a high school education (40%) than in those who have completed college (19%).

Preventive Health Services

- Twenty-seven percent of Los Angeles County women did not have a Pap smear in the past 2 years. Among uninsured women, 40% did not have a Pap smear during this period.
- The percentage that did not have a Pap smear was higher among Asian women (32%) and Latinas (31%) than white (25%) and African-American women (21%).
- Among women aged 50 and older, 24% did not have a mammogram in the past 2 years. Among uninsured women in this age group, 40% did not have a mammogram during this period.
- Among women aged 50 and older, 32% of Asians, 25% of Latinas, 23% of whites and 20% of African-Americans did not have a mammogram in the past 2 years.
- Forty-nine percent of men 40 years and older did not have a prostate exam in the past 2 years. Among uninsured men in this group, 71% did not have a prostate exam in the past 2 years.
- The percentage of men 40 years and older who did not have a prostate exam in the past two years was highest among Asians (64%), followed by Latinos (59%), African-Americans (48%), and whites (42%).

Health Insurance continued

Children:

- Nearly 25% of children 0–17 years old in Los Angeles County do not have health insurance.
- Twenty-nine percent of adolescents (ages 13–17), 24% of children between 5 and 12 years and 24% of children less than 5 years of age do not have health insurance.
- Percentages of uninsured are highest among Latino (33%) and Asian children (20%). Lower rates are found among African-American (14%) and white children (10%).
- Eighty-one percent of uninsured children in Los Angeles County (560,000) are living in families with incomes at or below 200% of the federal poverty level.

Note: For more detailed data on health insurance and regular source of care at the county, service planning area, and health district levels, please refer to Appendices B-5, B-6, C-1 through C-8

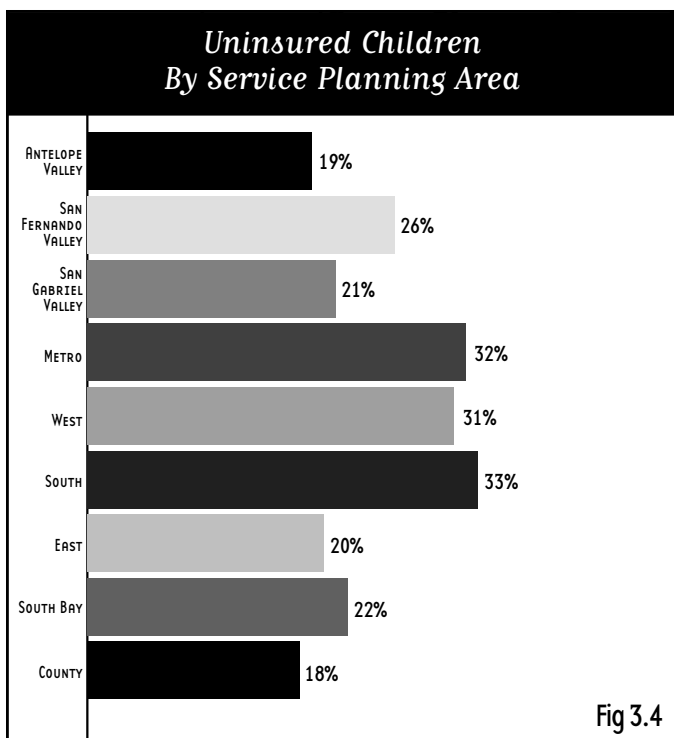


Fig 3.4

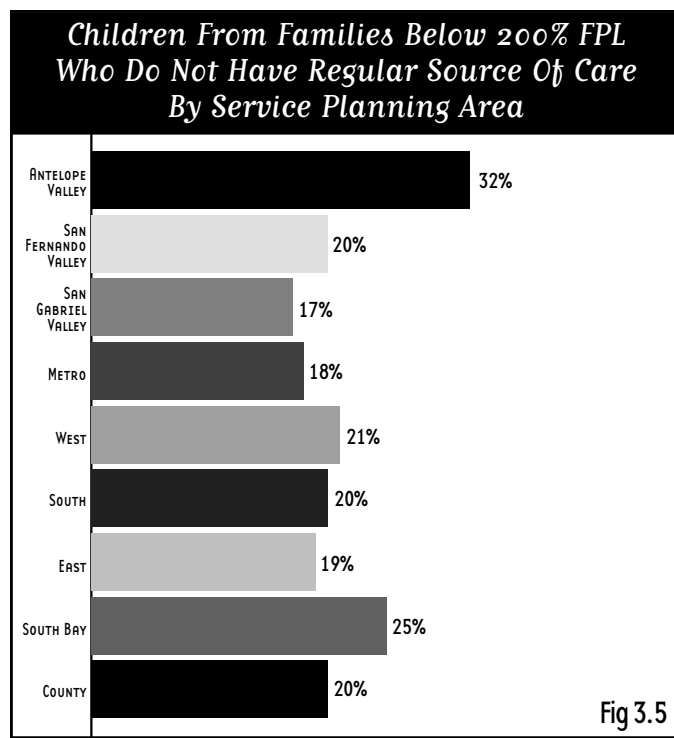
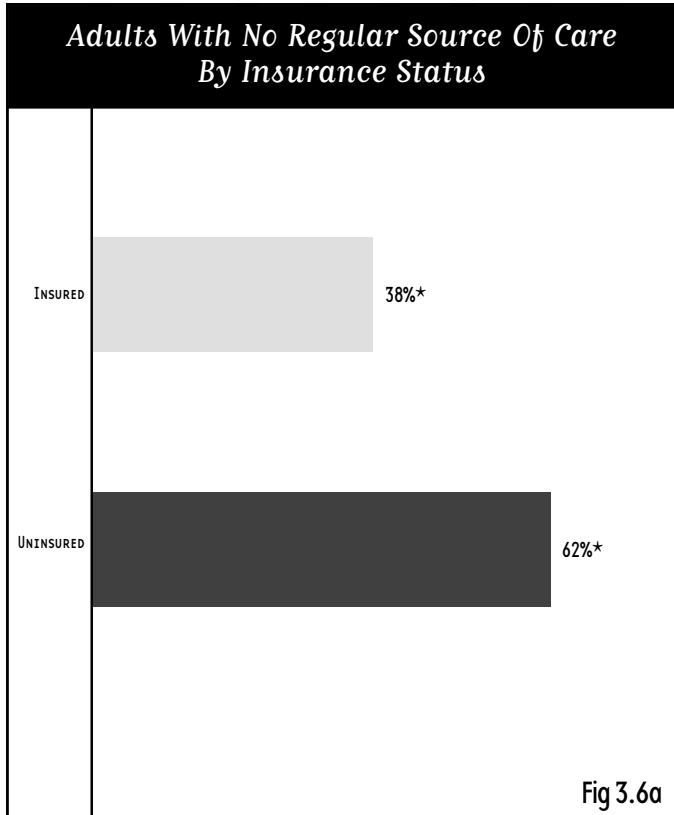
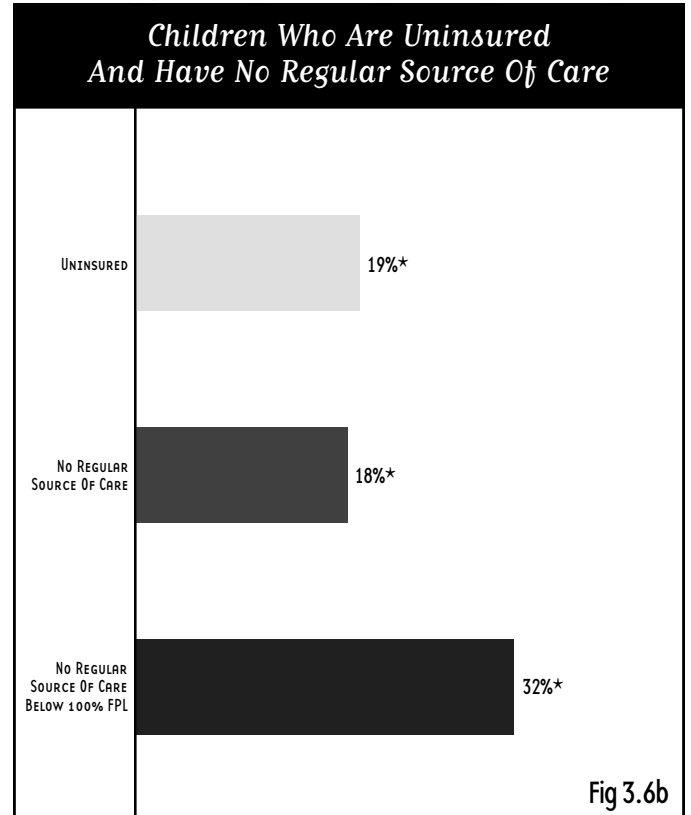


Fig 3.5

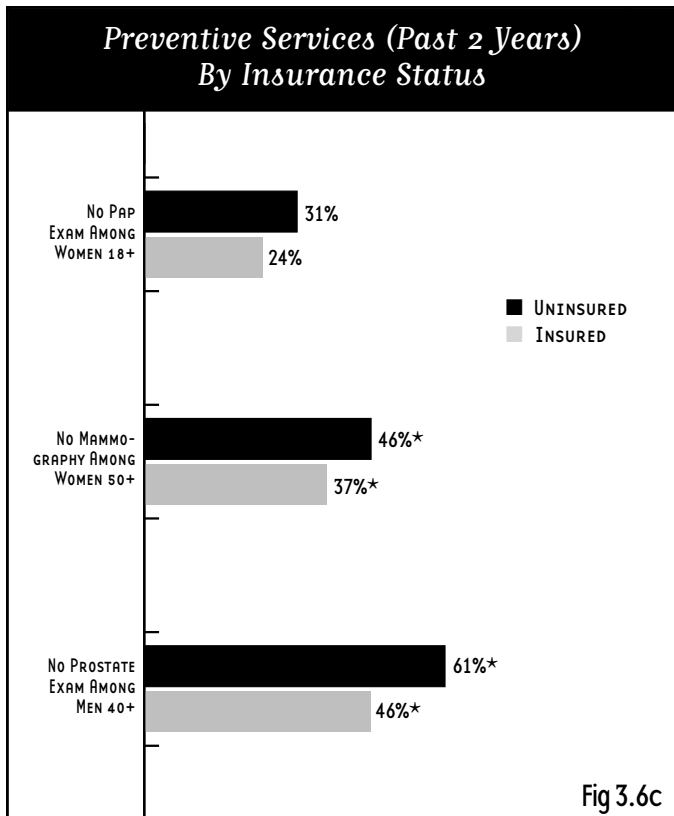
- Children 0–17 years.
- For a family of four, the 1997 federal poverty level is \$16,050 a year and 200% of poverty is \$32,100.



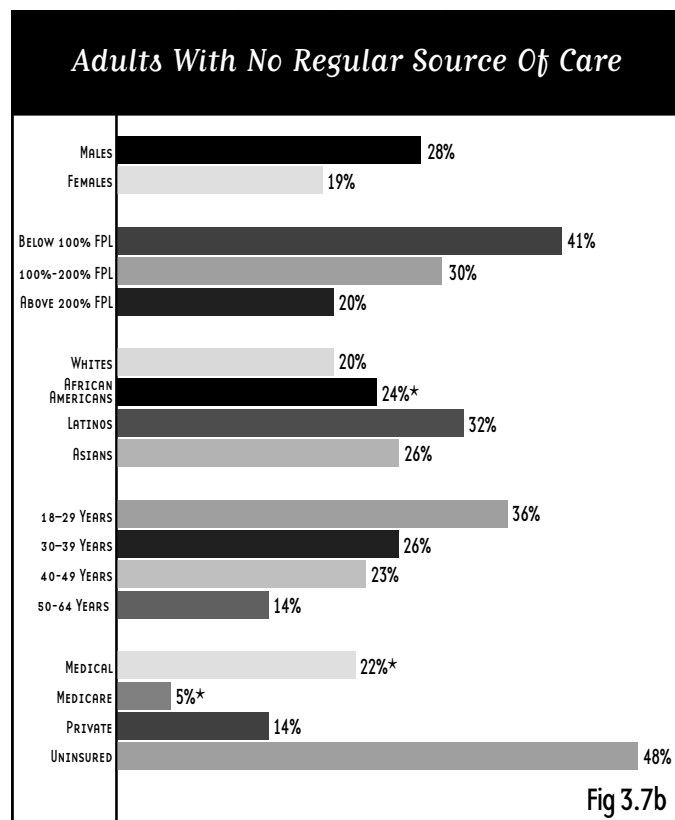
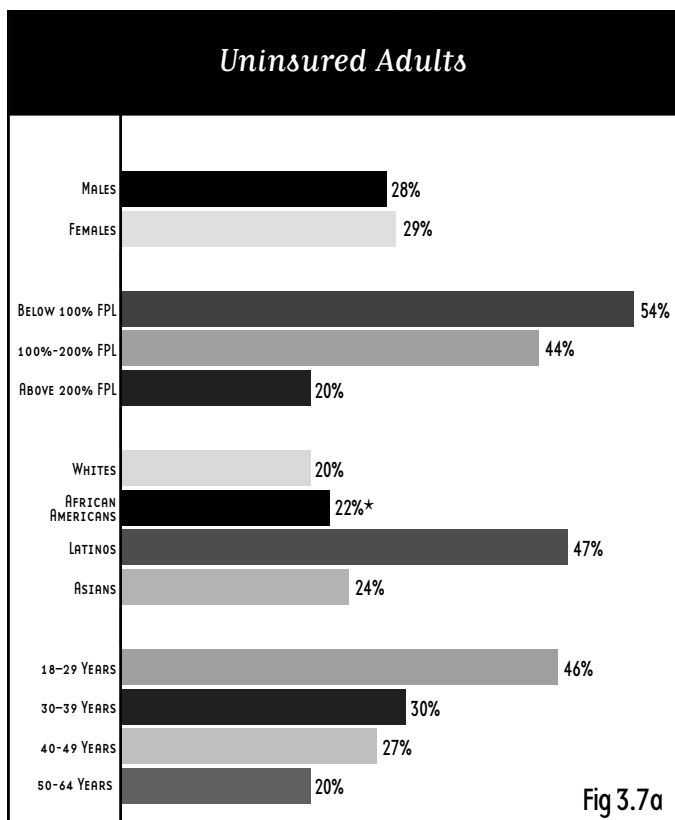
* Adults age 18-64 years.



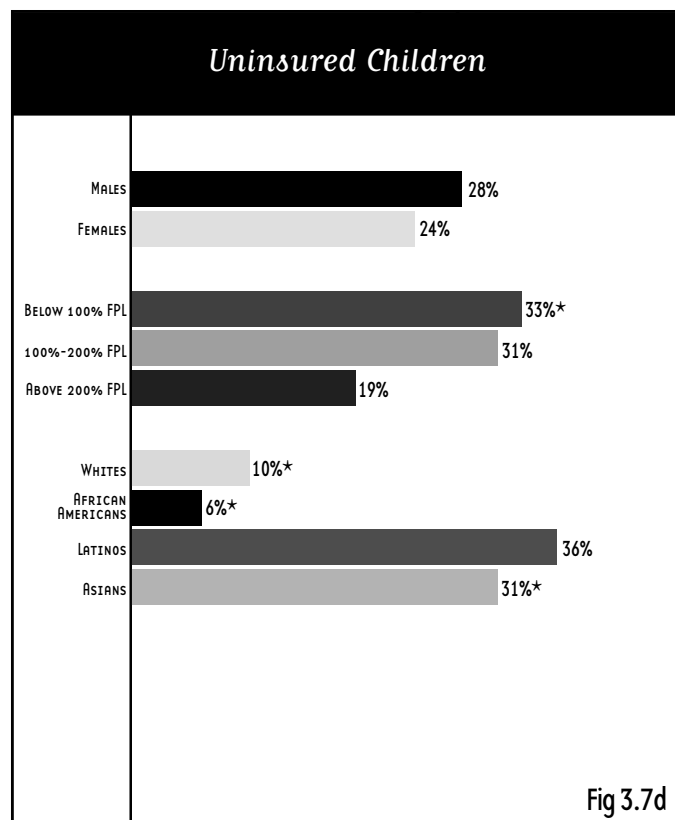
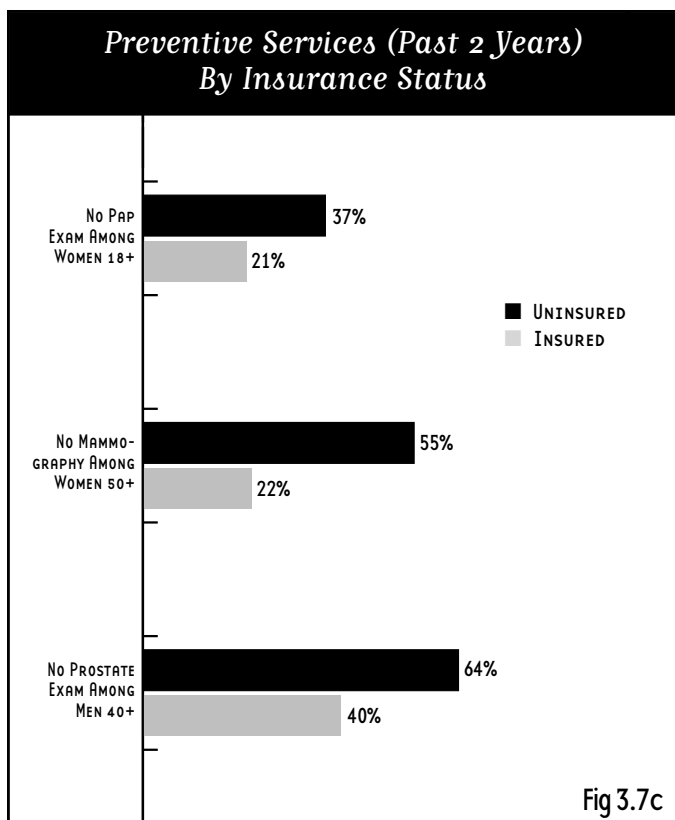
* For a family of four, the 1997 federal poverty level is \$16,050 a year and 200% of poverty is \$32,100.



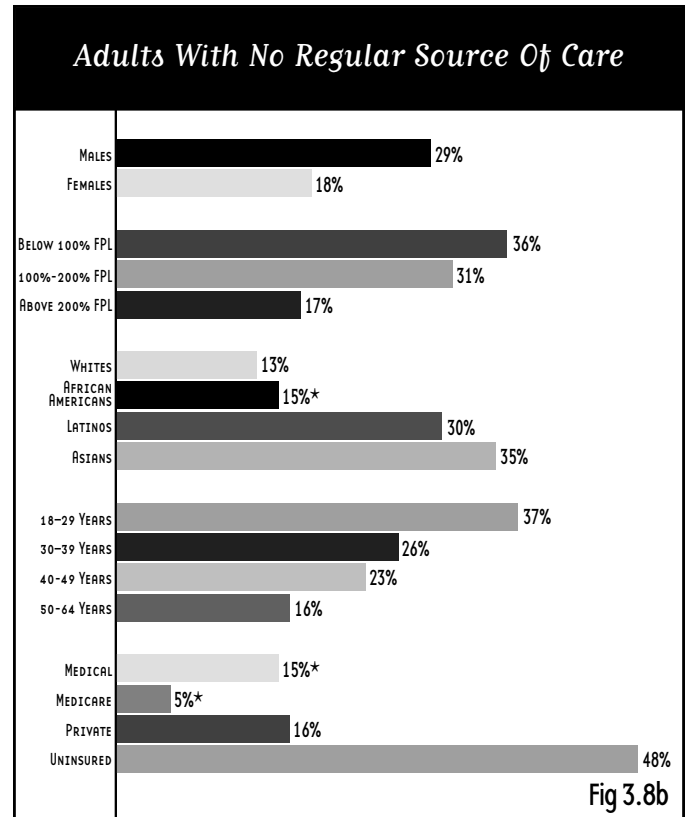
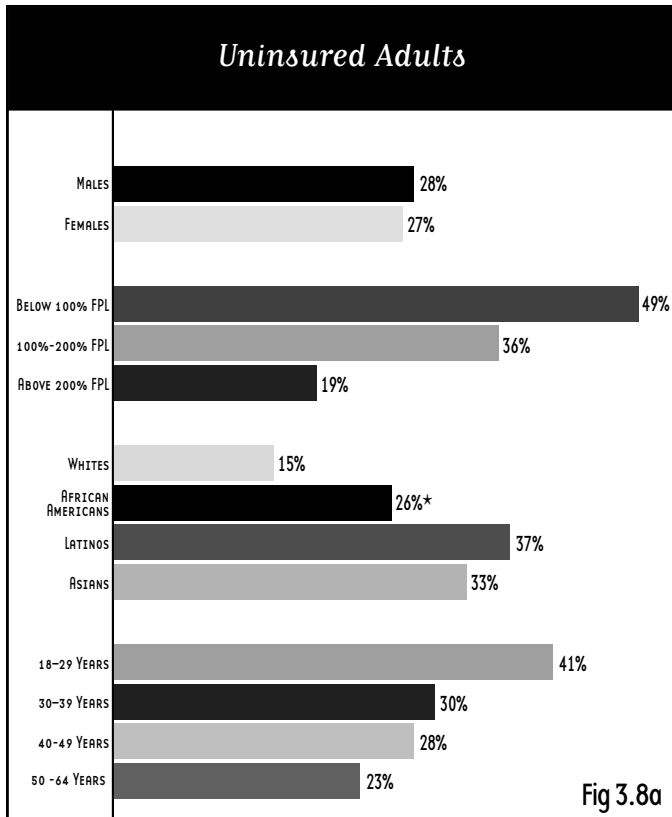
* Prevalence for noted subgroup is based on small numbers (fewer than 30 respondents in the subgroup).



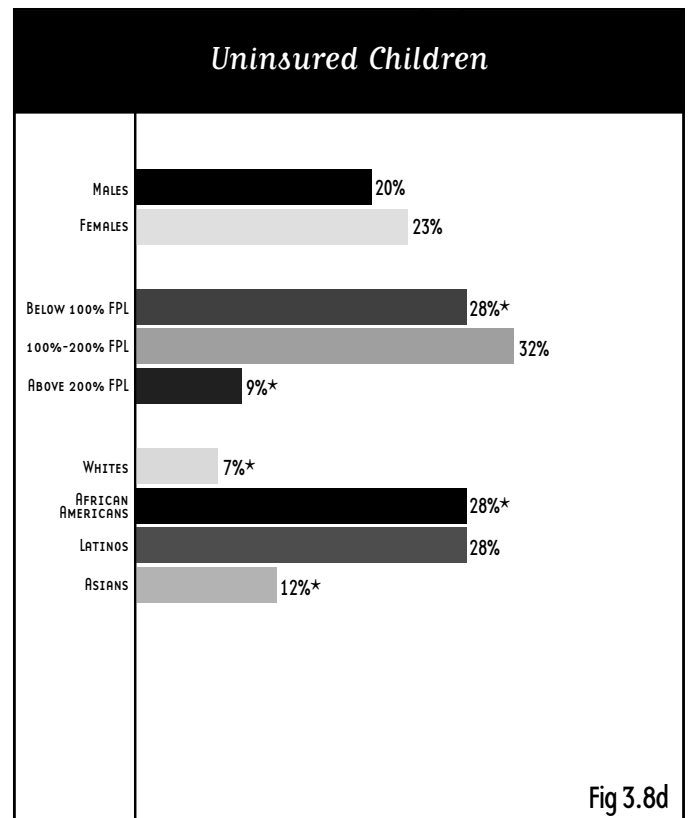
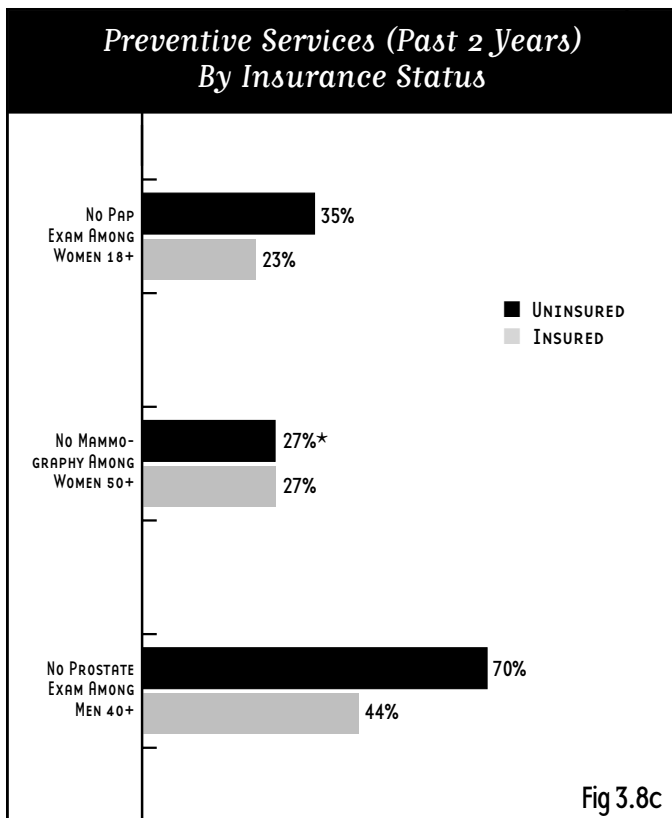
* Adults age 18-64 years.



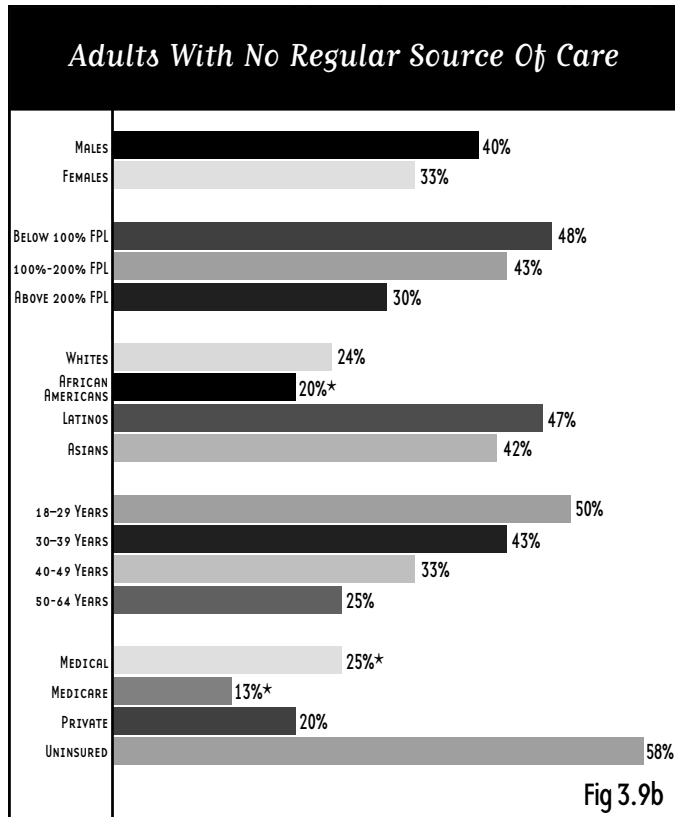
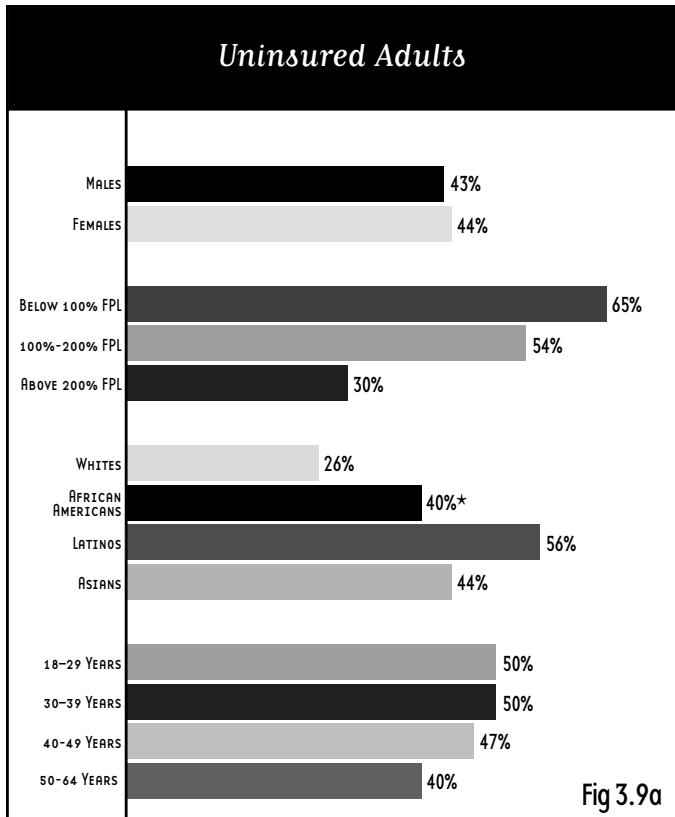
* Children 0-17 years.



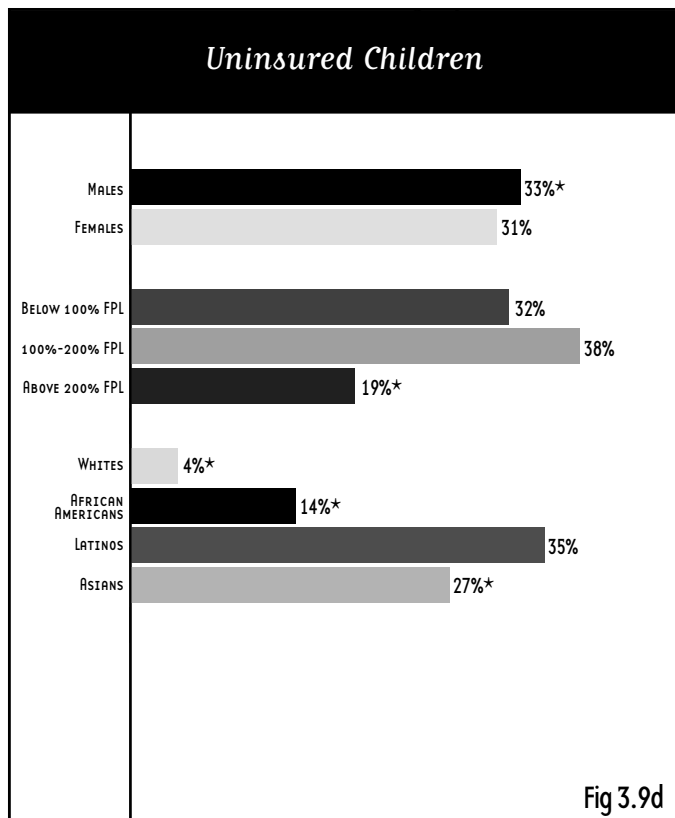
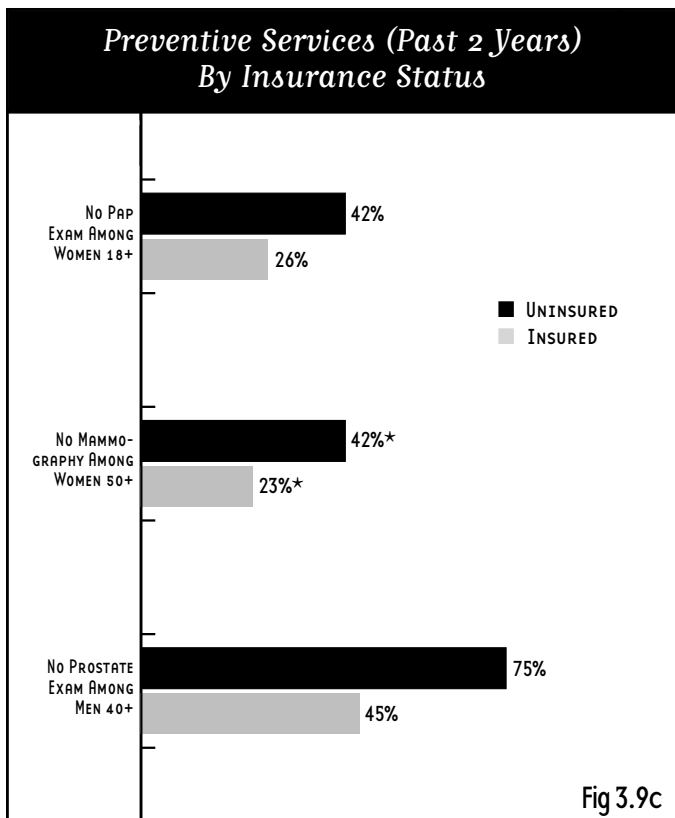
* Adults age 18-64 years.



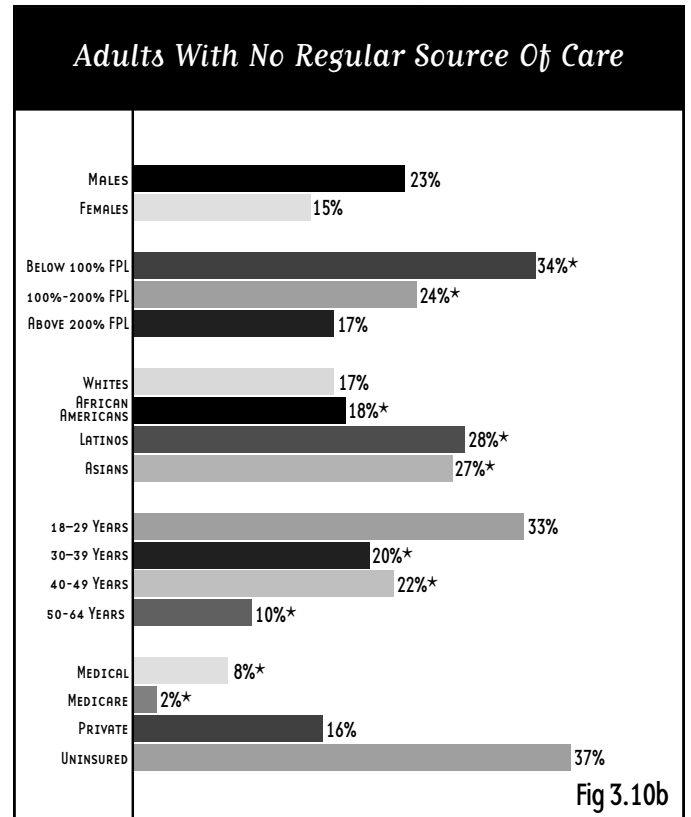
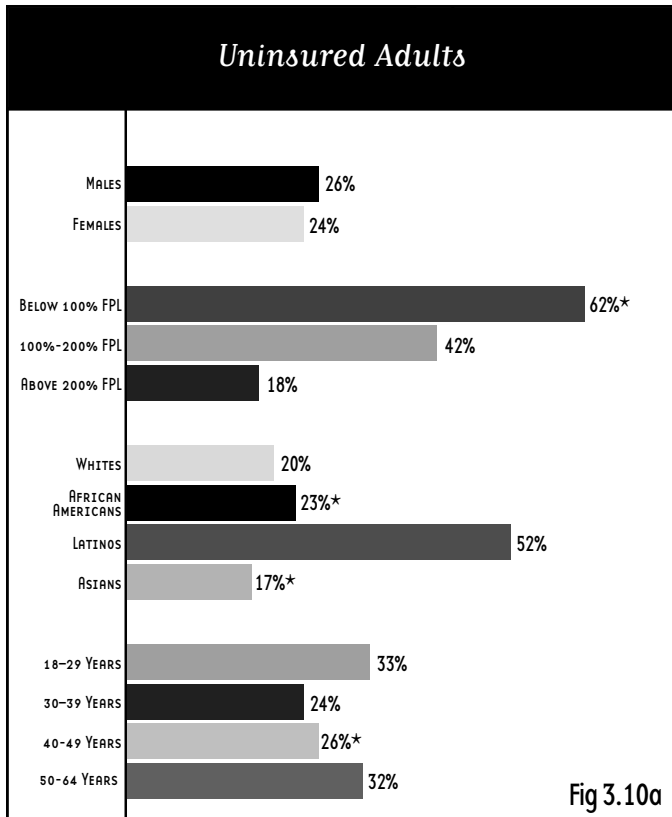
* Children 0-17 years.



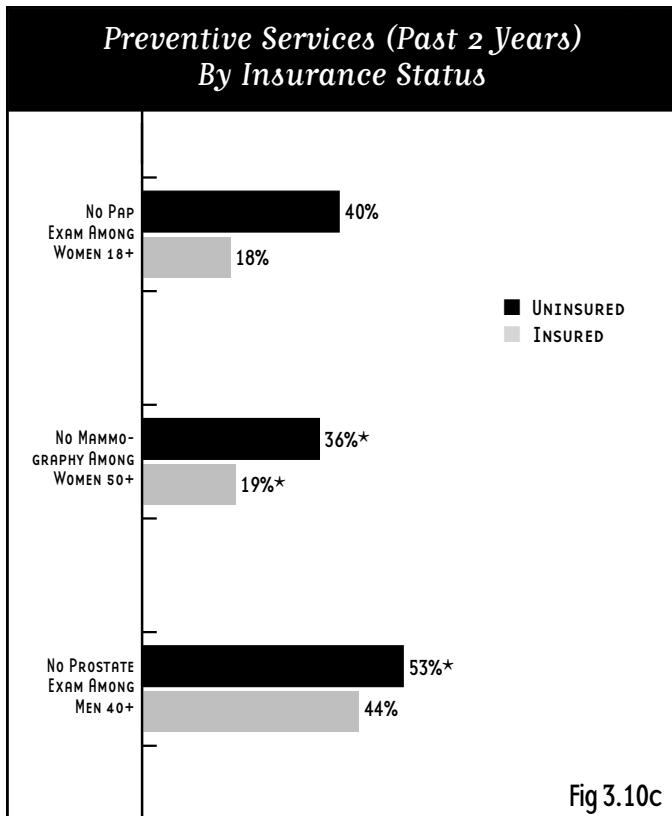
* Adults age 18-64 years.



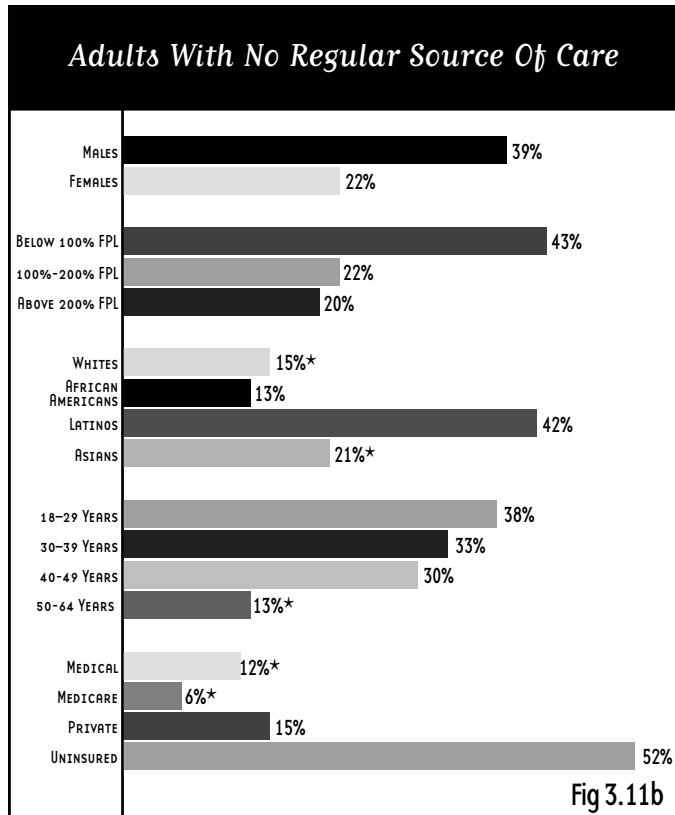
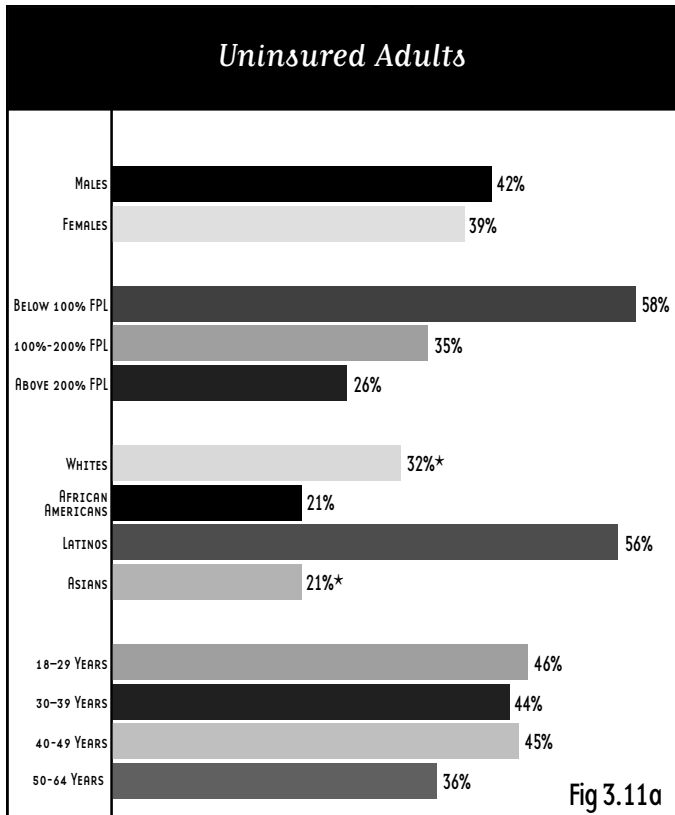
* Children 0-17 years.



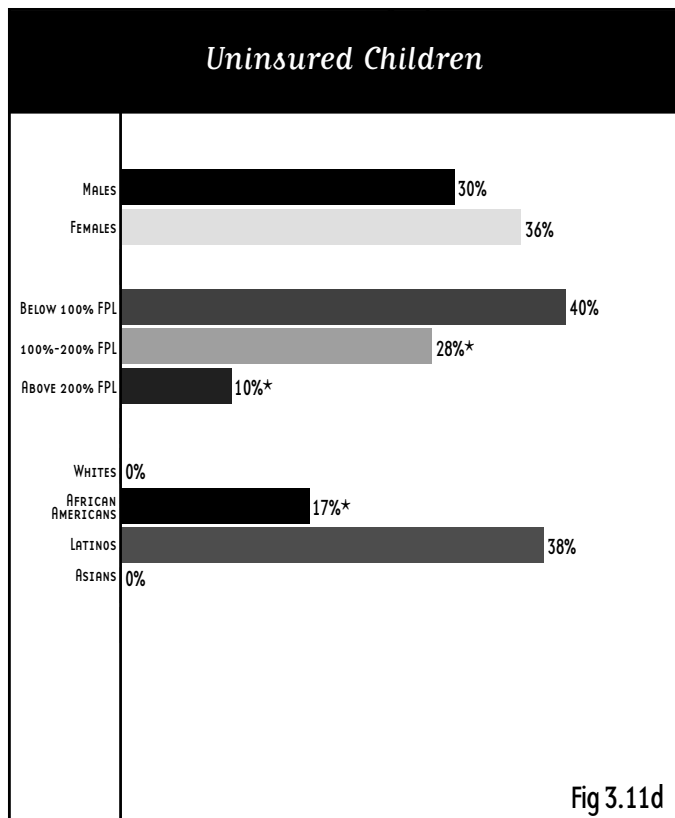
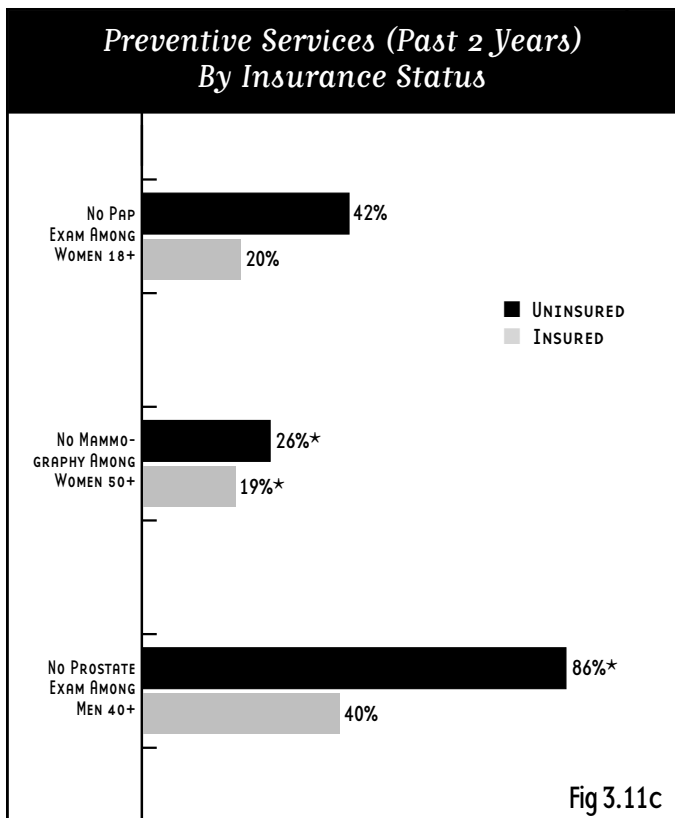
* Adults age 18-64 years.



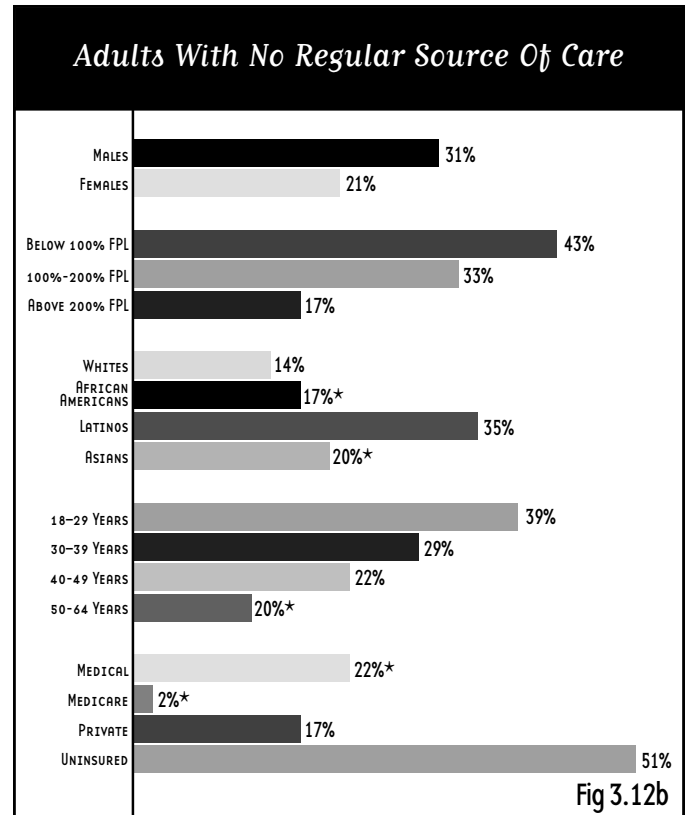
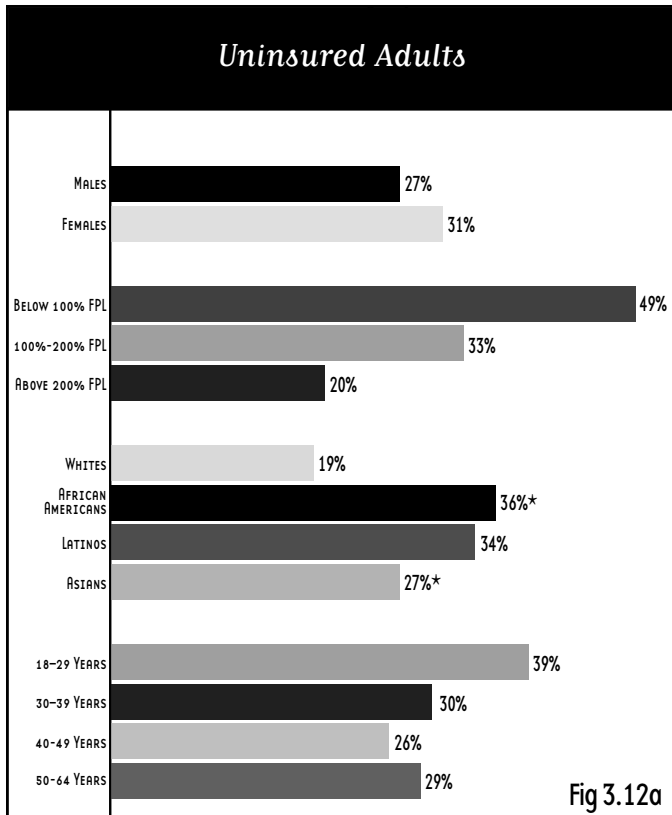
* Prevalence for noted subgroup is based on small numbers (fewer than 30 respondents in the subgroup).



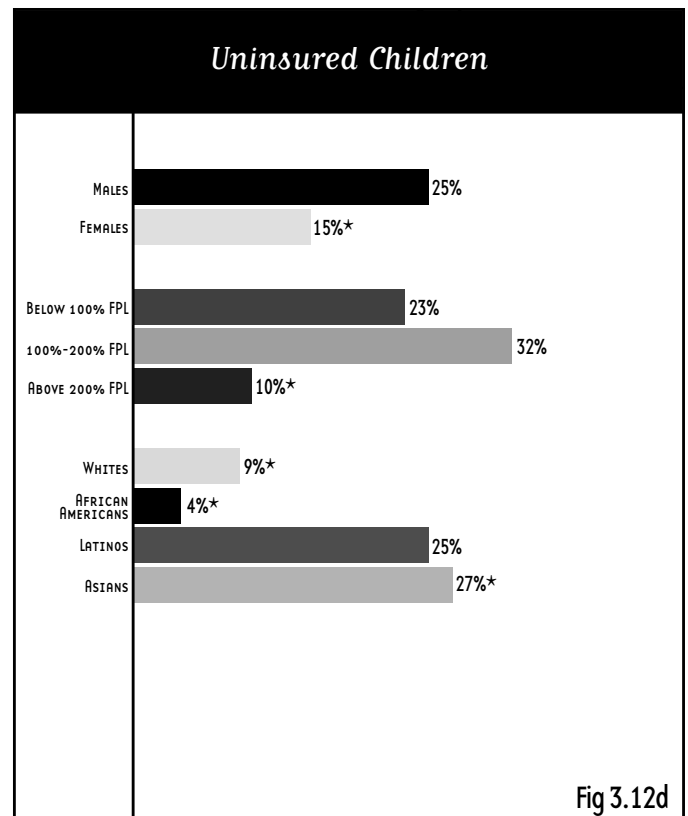
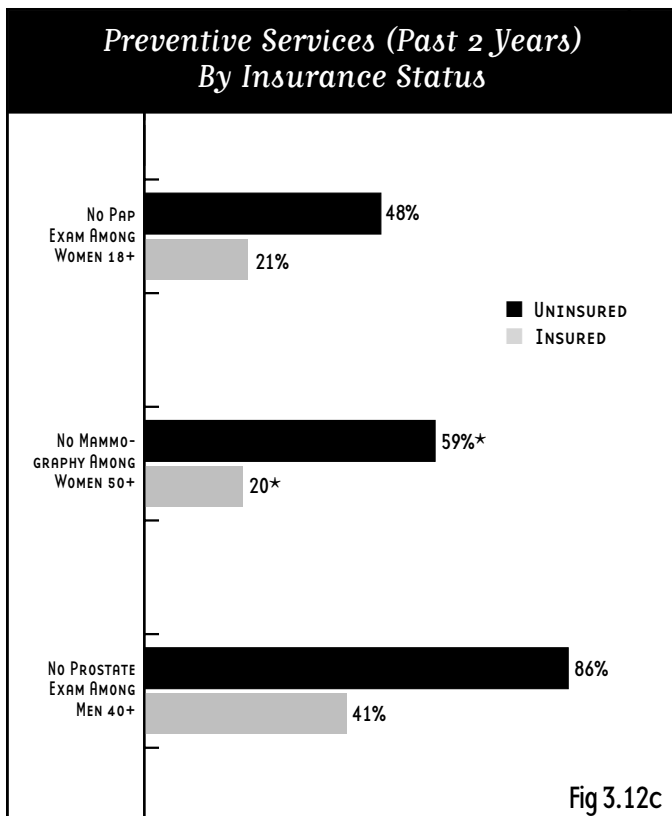
* Adults age 18-64 years.



* Children 0-17 years.

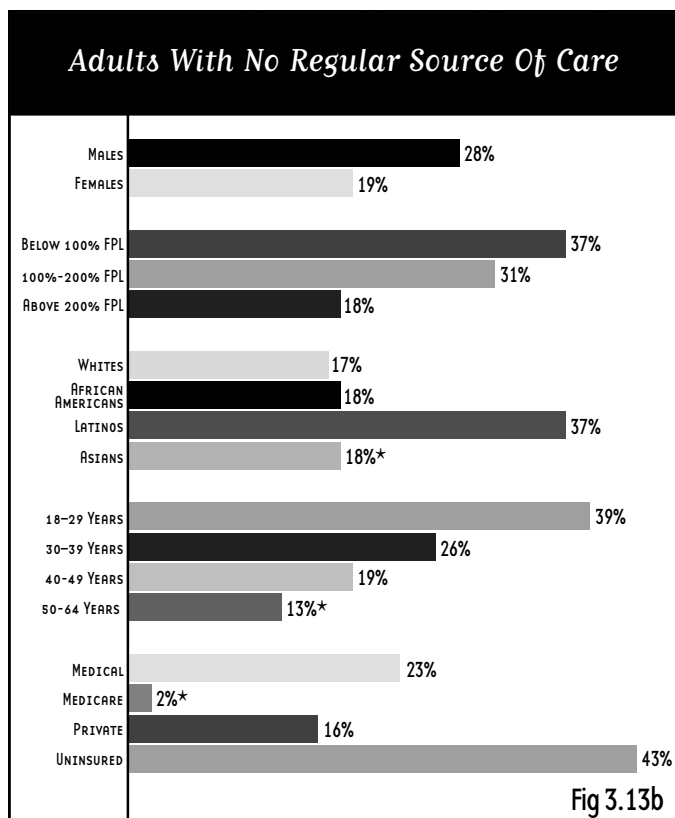
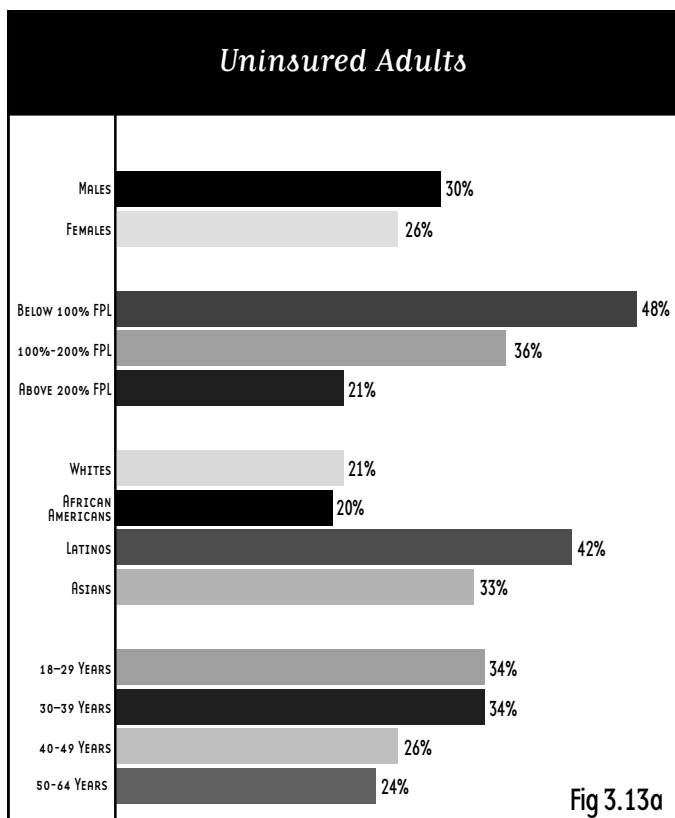


* Adults age 18-64 years.

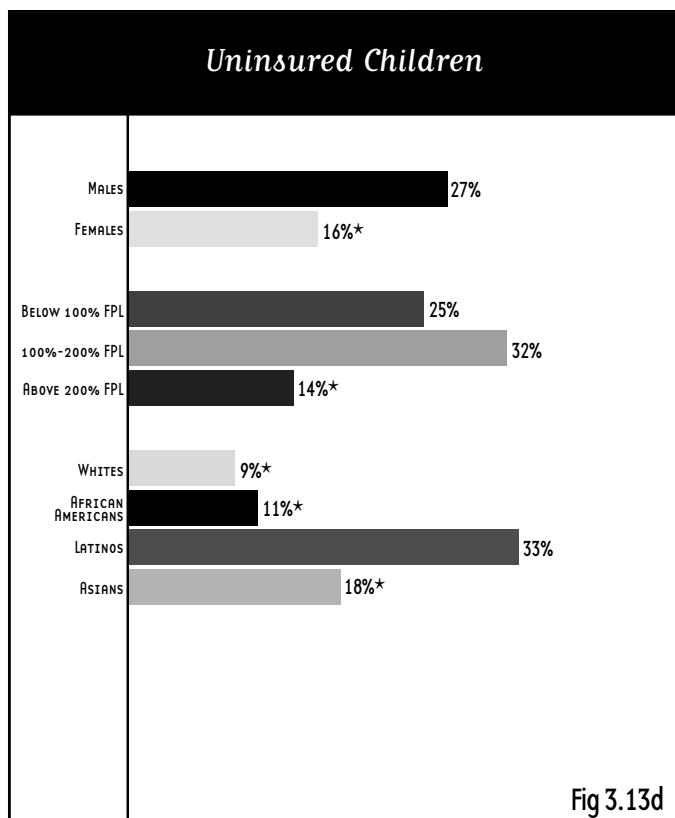
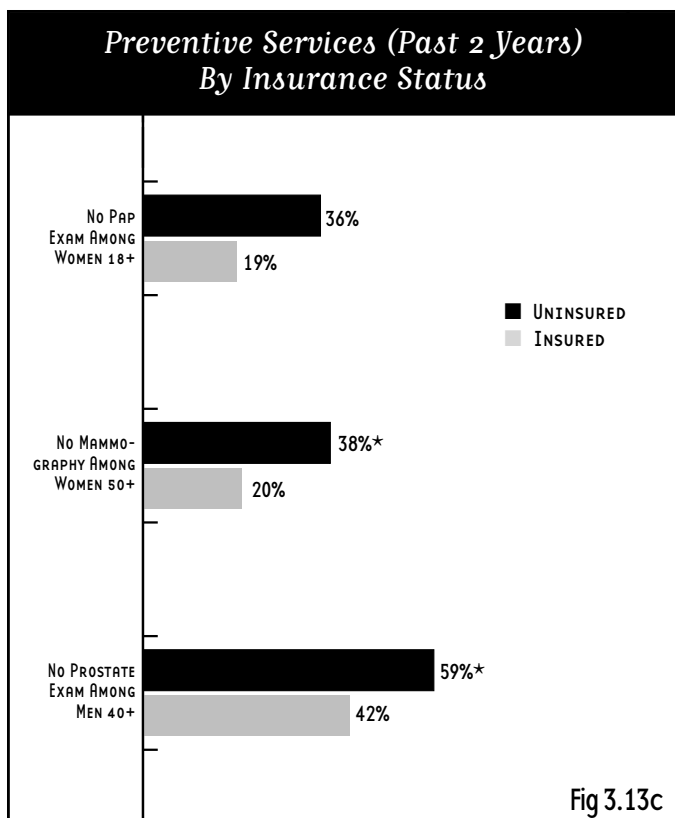


* Children 0-17 years.

* Prevalence for noted subgroup is based on small numbers (fewer than 30 respondents in the subgroup).



* Adults age 18-64 years.



* Children 0-17 years.

Other Barriers to Getting Health Care

Although lack of health insurance represents a major barrier to obtaining health care, other factors such as inability to pay, lack of transportation, language and/or cultural differences with providers, long waiting times, and lack of culturally sensitive services all can impede access to health. While some barriers are more logistical, or reflect poor resource allocation, many have to do with the culture of health care systems and how responsive these systems are to the needs of the patients served.

WHAT DID THE SURVEY MEASURE?

Difficulty Getting Care

Respondents (18 and older) rated the general ease or difficulty in getting necessary medical care.

Financial Barriers

Respondents reported needing services in the past year that they could not obtain due to inability to pay. These services included prescription medicine, mental health care or counseling, dental care (including check ups), eyeglasses, and seeing a doctor for a health problem.

Difficulty Accessing Services

Parents rated the general ease or difficulty obtaining and/or paying for health and medical and day-to-day expenses, child care, and dental and vision care for their child(ren).

Transportation Barriers

Children (0 to 17 years) whose parents reported difficulty with transportation to and from their medical provider, by Service Planning Area.

Waiting Times

Children who usually wait more than 60 minutes to be seen by their health care provider by Service Planning Area.

Language Barriers

Children whose parents report difficulty communicating with their provider because of language differences.

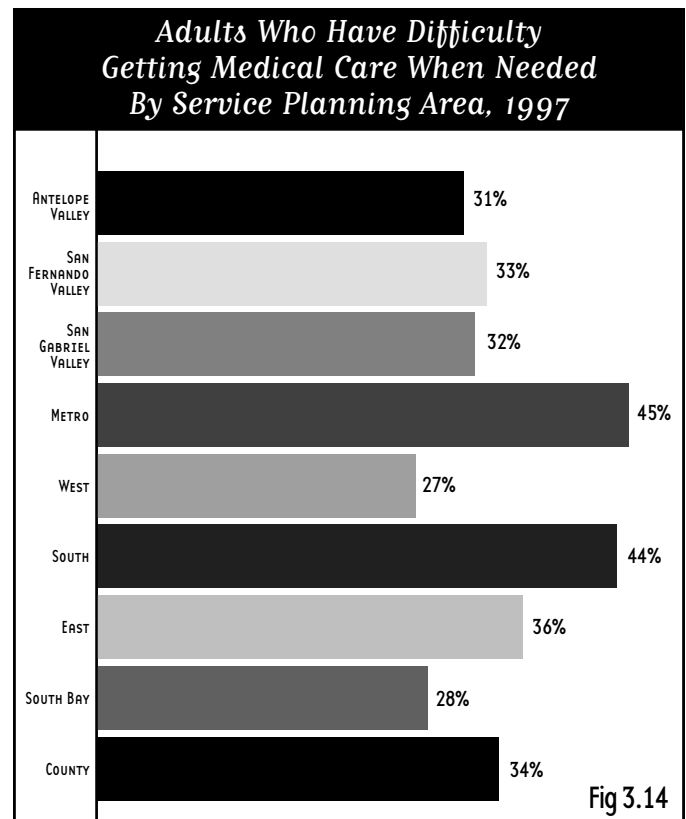


Fig 3.14

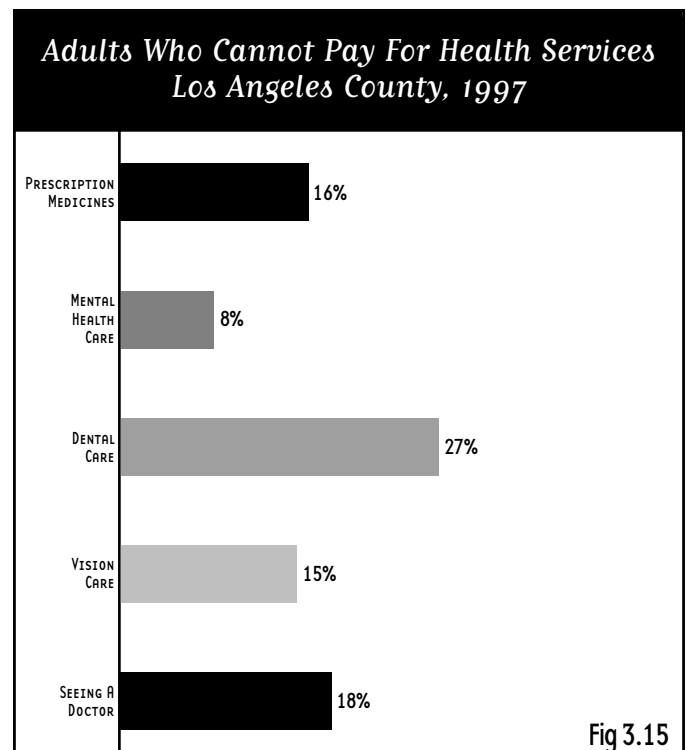


Fig 3.15

Note: the term "parent" is used to describe the parent, grandparent or legal guardian, who is responsible for the focal child in the survey.

FINDINGS ABOUT BARRIERS TO GETTING NEEDED HEALTH CARE SERVICES

Adults:

DIFFICULTY GETTING CARE

- Thirty-four percent of Los Angeles County adults report difficulty obtaining needed medical care.
- Latinos (47%) have the highest percentage of adults who report difficulty obtaining needed medical care followed by Asians (36%), African-Americans (32%) and whites (23%).
- Among persons with family incomes below the 100% federal poverty level, 54% report difficulty obtaining needed medical care compared to 25% of adults with family incomes above the 200% federal poverty level.
- The percentage of adults who report difficulty obtaining needed medical care decreases with advancing age, with 43% of 18–29 year olds reporting difficulty compared to 24% of adults 50 years and older.
- Fifty-one percent of adults with less than a high school education report difficulty obtaining needed medical care compared to 25% of college graduates.

FINANCIAL BARRIERS (reported for the year that preceded the survey)

Prescription Medicines

- Sixteen percent of adults in Los Angeles County cannot pay for prescription medicines that they need.

Mental Health Care

- Eight percent of Los Angeles County adults cannot pay for needed mental health care.

Dental Care

- Twenty-seven percent of adults cannot pay for needed dental care.

Adults Who Have Difficulty Paying For A Doctor Visit For A Health Problem In The Past Year By Service Planning Area, 1997

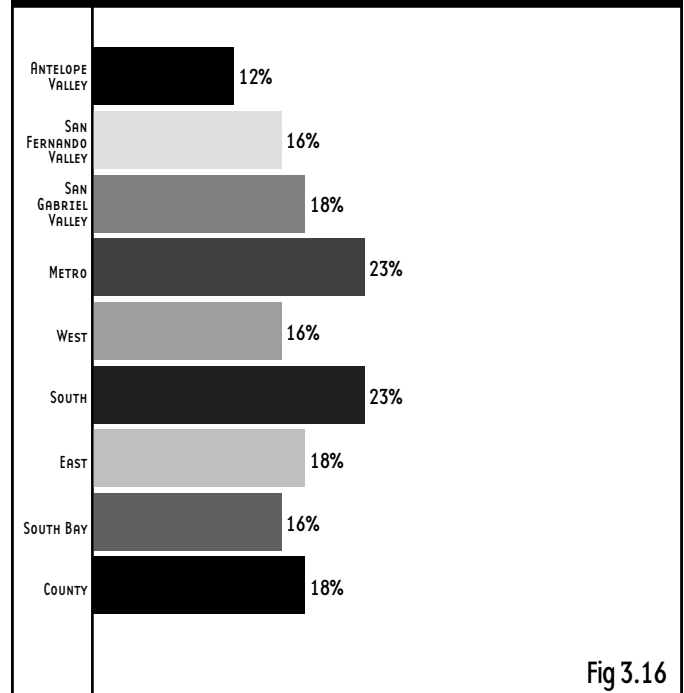


Fig 3.16

Vision Care

- Fifteen percent of adults in Los Angeles County need eyeglasses and cannot afford them.

Visiting a Physician

- Eighteen percent of Los Angeles County adults have difficulty paying for a doctor visit when they have a medical problem.
- Among racial and ethnic groups, 24% of Latinos have difficulty paying for a doctor visit when they have a medical problem, followed by Asians (18%), African-Americans (17%) and whites (13%).
- Twenty-two percent of adults 18–29 years of age cannot pay for a physician visit compared to 12% of adults 50 years and older.
- Among those with less than a high school education, 27% cannot pay to see a physician compared to 12% of graduates.

Barriers continued

Children less than age 18:

- Nine percent of children ages 0–17 years did not receive needed medical care in the past 3 months.
- Twenty-eight percent of Los Angeles County parents with children ages 0–17 years have difficulty paying for health and medical expenses.
- Thirty-five percent of parents have difficulty accessing child care.
- Twenty-nine percent of parents have difficulty paying for vision care, such as eyeglasses, for their child.
- Seventeen percent of parents with children ages 0–17 years have difficulty accessing transportation to and from their child’s health care provider(s).
- Five percent of parents with children 0–17 years have difficulty communicating with their child’s health care provider due to language differences.
- Fourteen percent of parents with children ages 0–17 years say they usually have to wait more than 60 minutes for their child to be seen by a health care provider.

Note: For more detailed data on barriers to getting needed health care services for adults and children at the county, service planning area, and health district levels, please refer to Appendices B-6, C-1 through C-8.

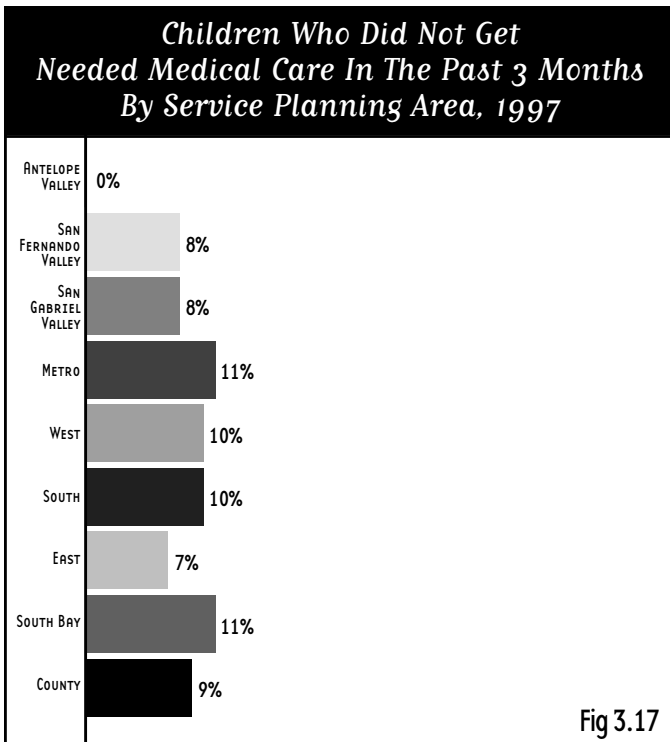


Fig 3.17

• Children 0–17 years.

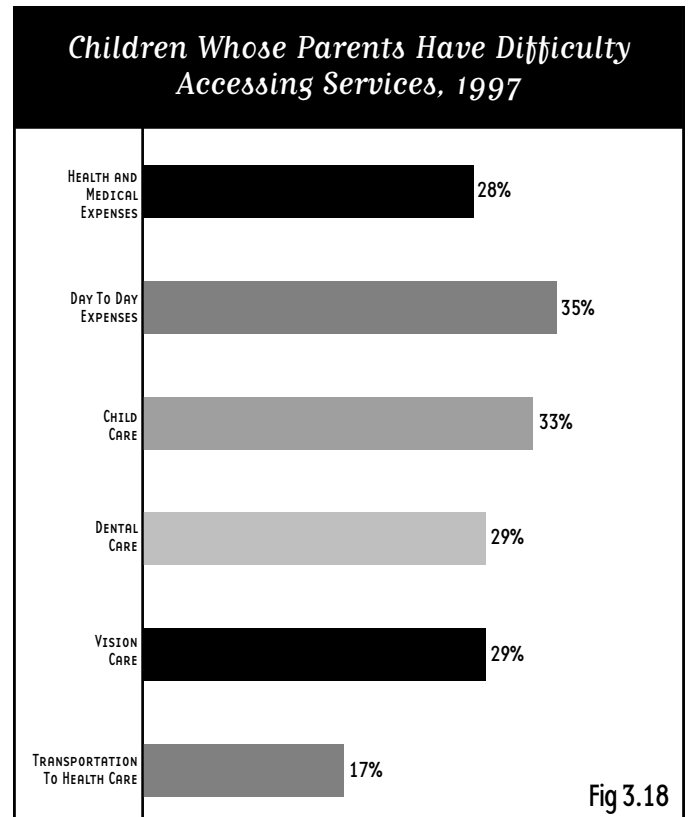


Fig 3.18

• Children 0–17 years.

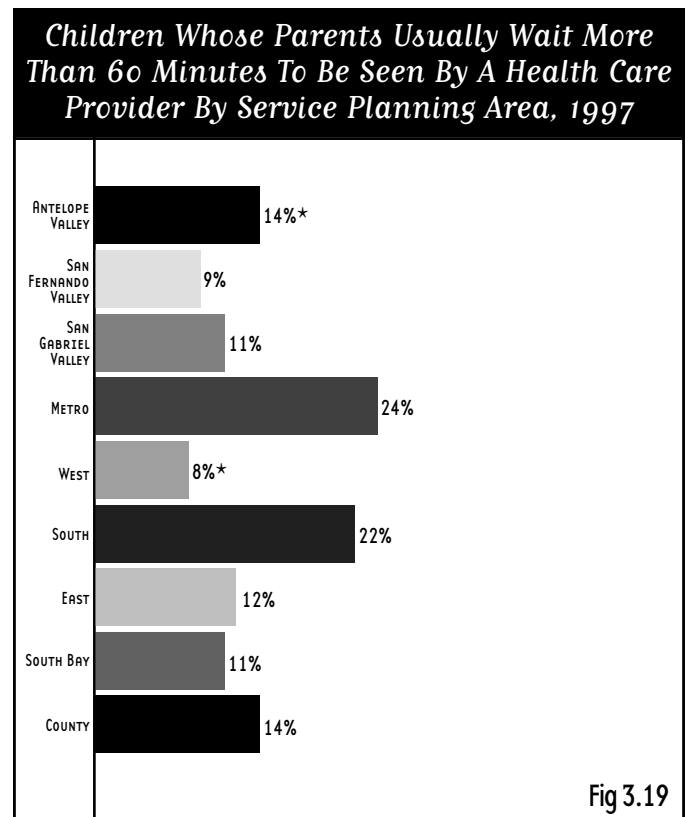
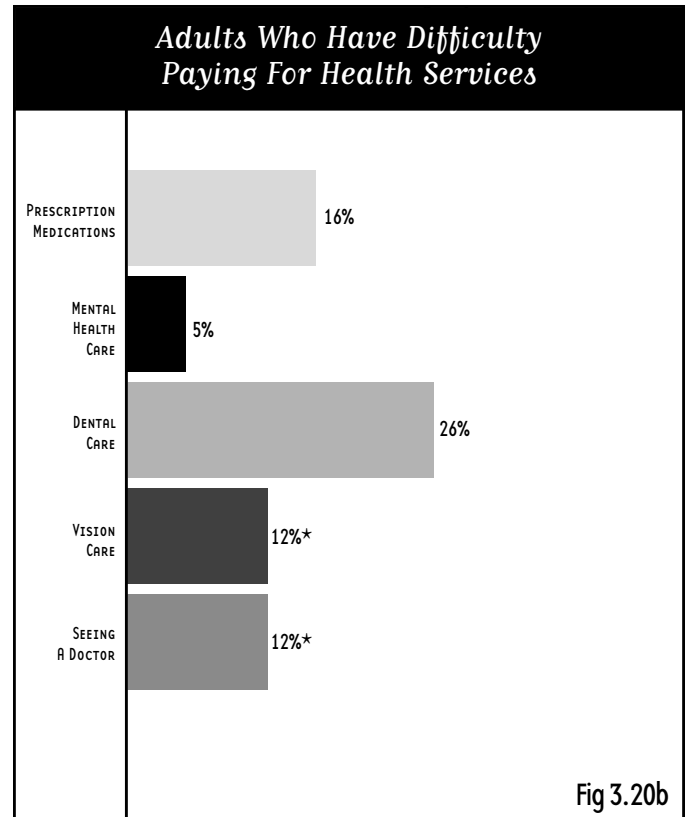
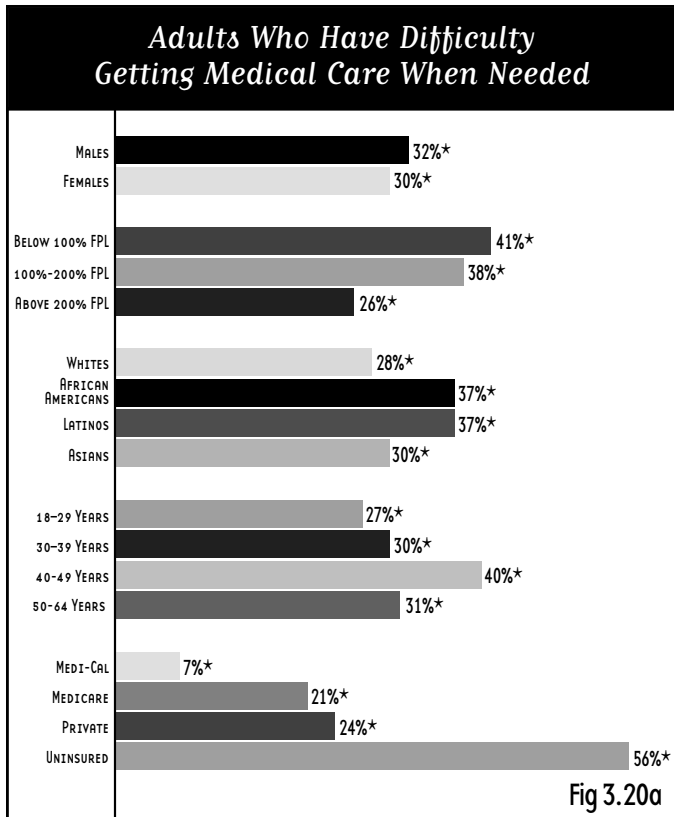
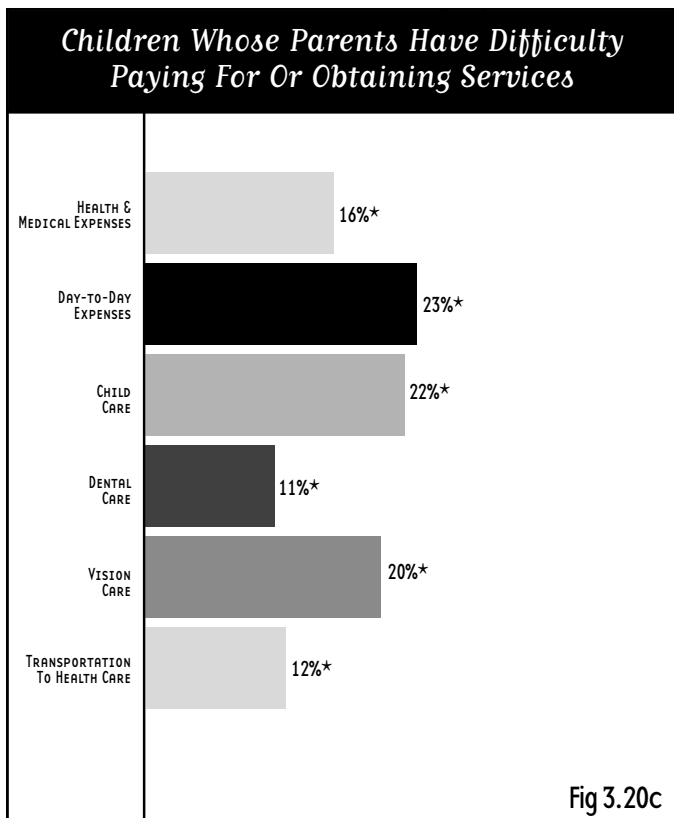


Fig 3.19

* Prevalence for noted subgroup is based on small numbers (fewer than 30 respondents in the subgroup).

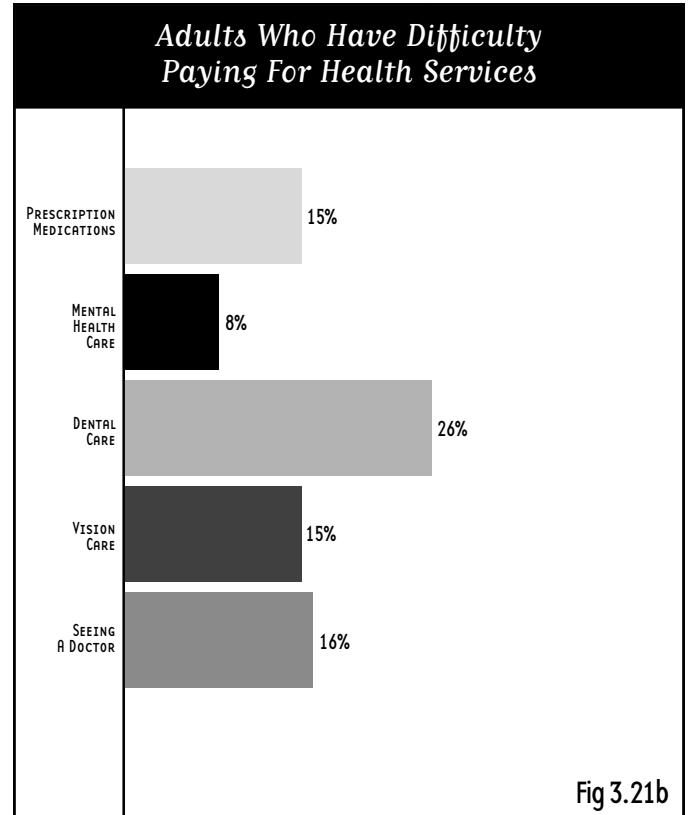
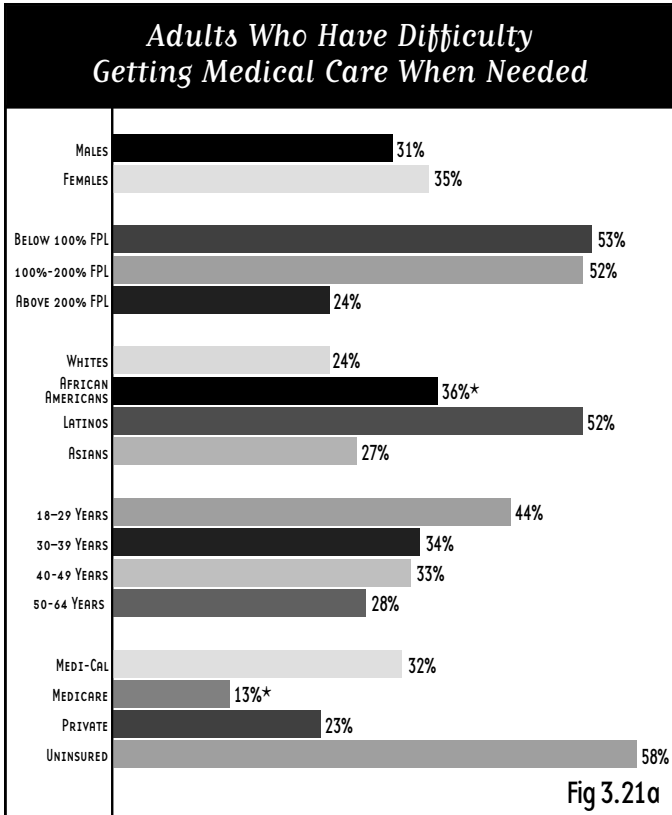


- For a family of four, the 1997 federal poverty level is \$16,050 a year and 200% of poverty is \$32,100.
- Adults 18 and older.



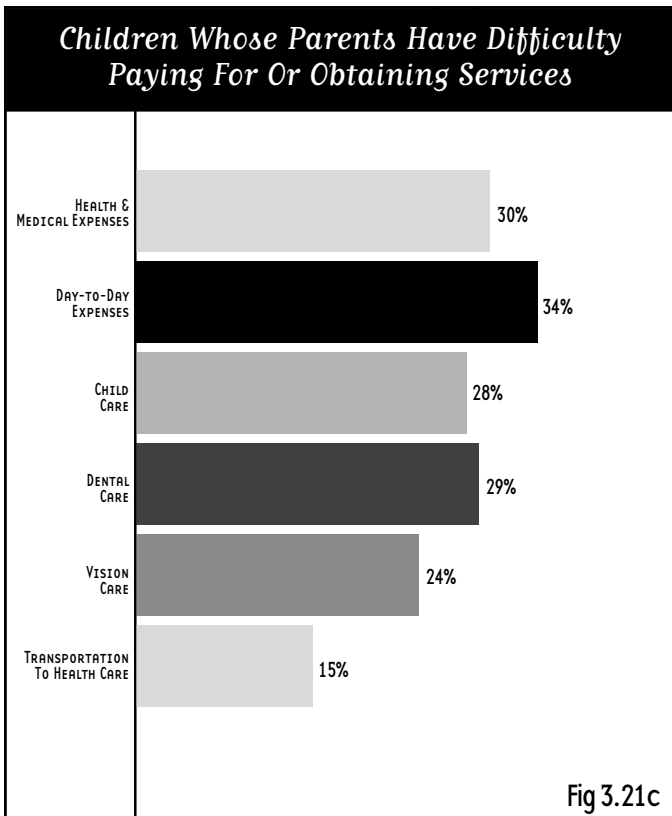
- Children 0-17 years.

* Prevalence for noted subgroup is based on small numbers (fewer than 30 respondents in the subgroup).



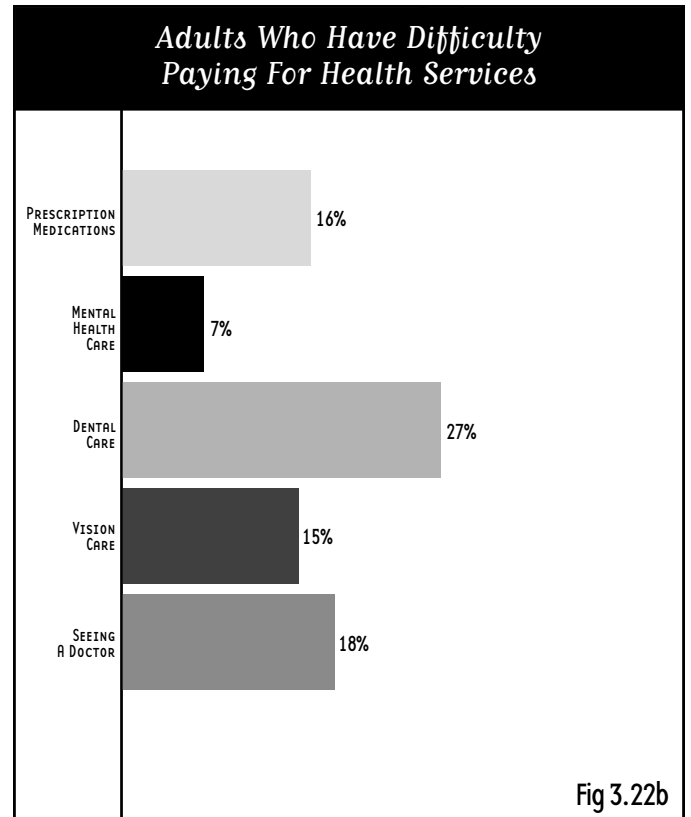
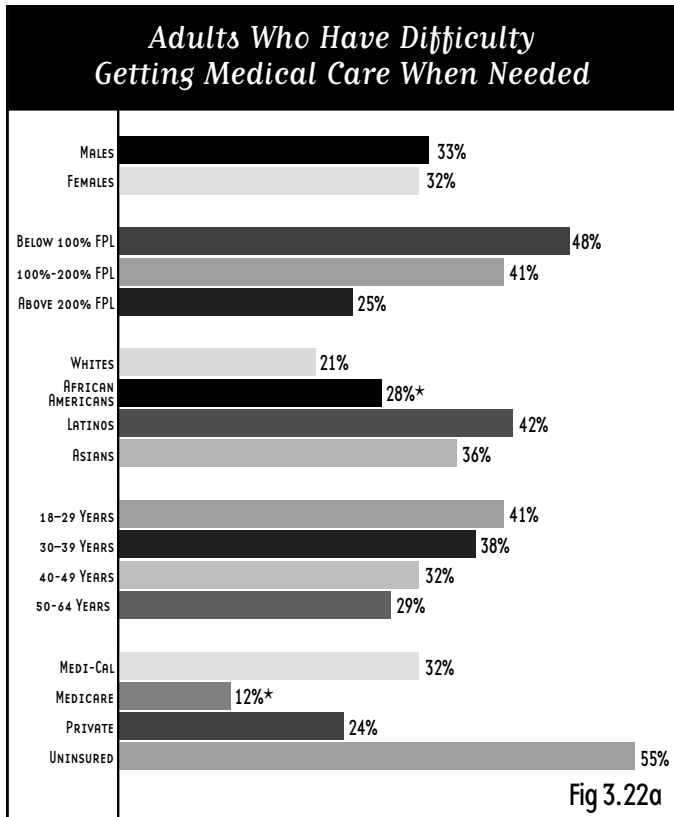
• For a family of four, the 1997 federal poverty level is \$16,050 a year and 200% of poverty is \$32,100.

• Adults 18 and older.

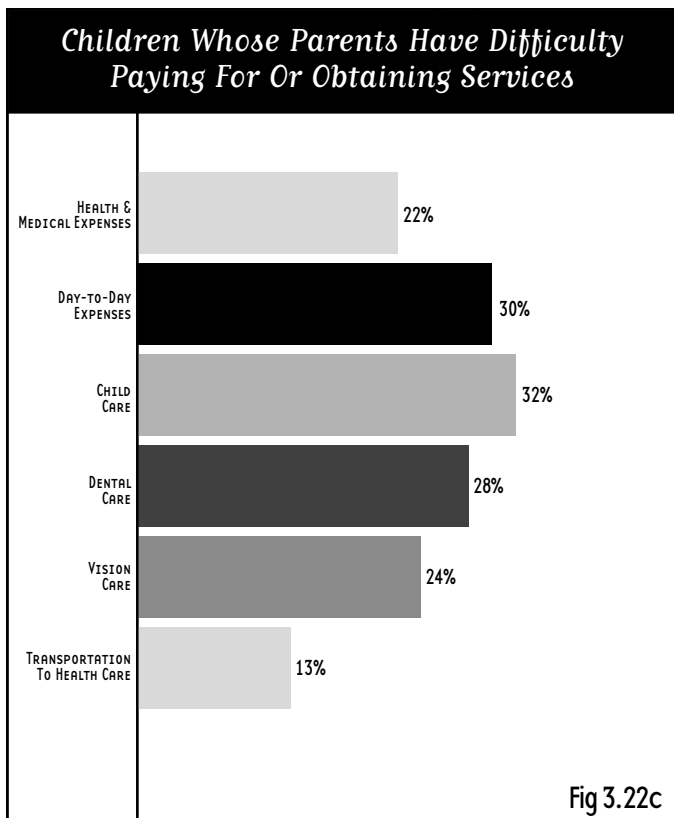


• Children 0-17 years.

* Prevalence for noted subgroup is based on small numbers (fewer than 30 respondents in the subgroup).

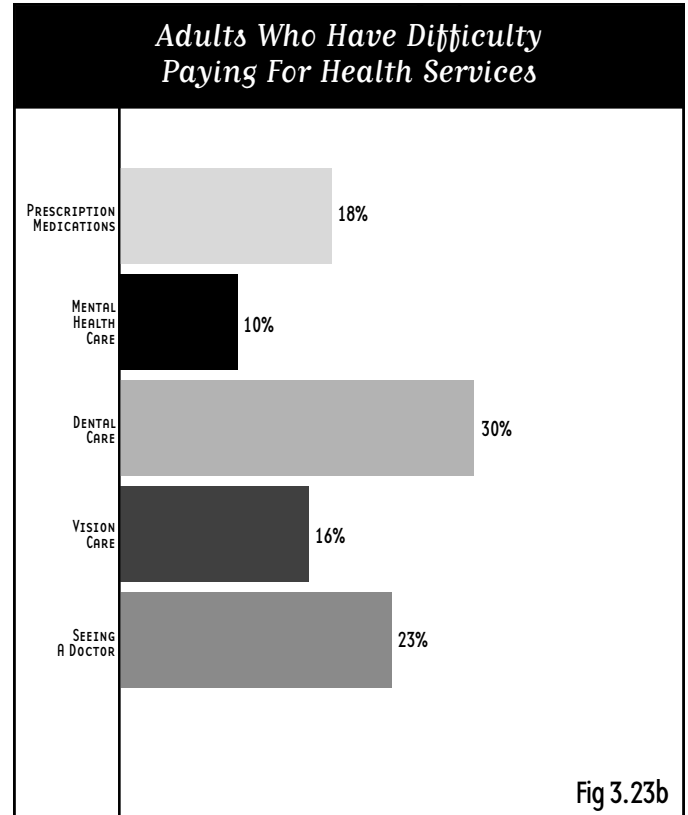
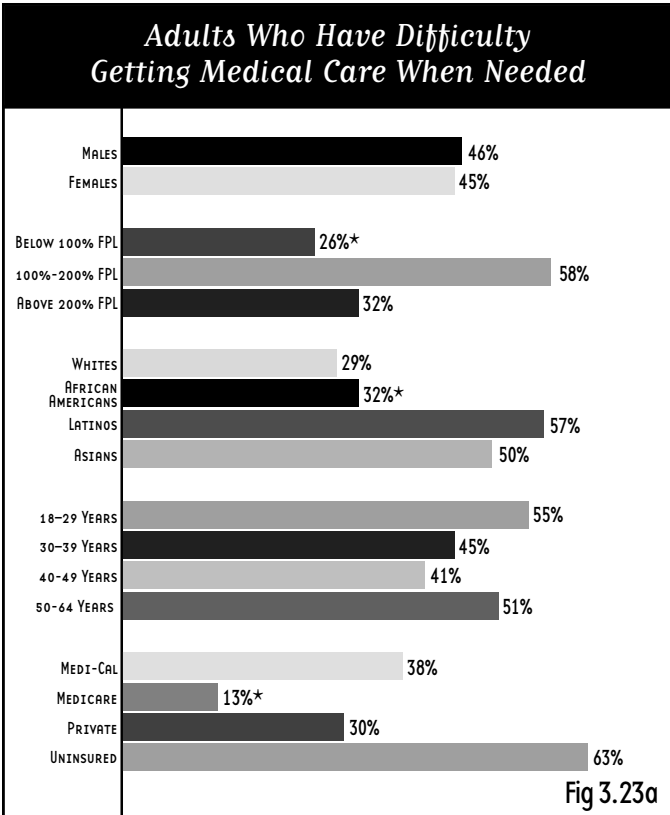


- For a family of four, the 1997 federal poverty level is \$16,050 a year and 200% of poverty is \$32,100.
- Adults 18 and older.



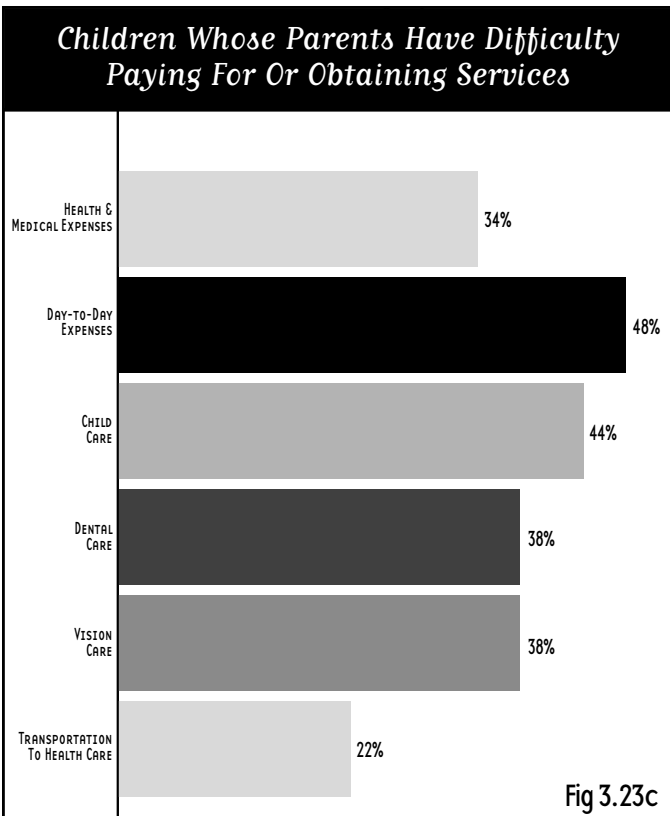
- Children 0-17 years.

* Prevalence for noted subgroup is based on small numbers (fewer than 30 respondents in the subgroup).



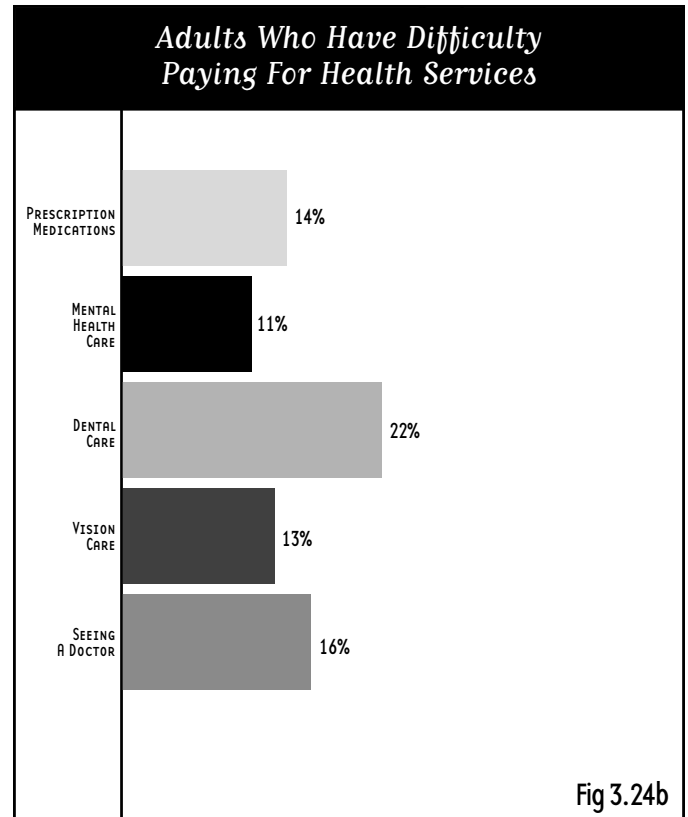
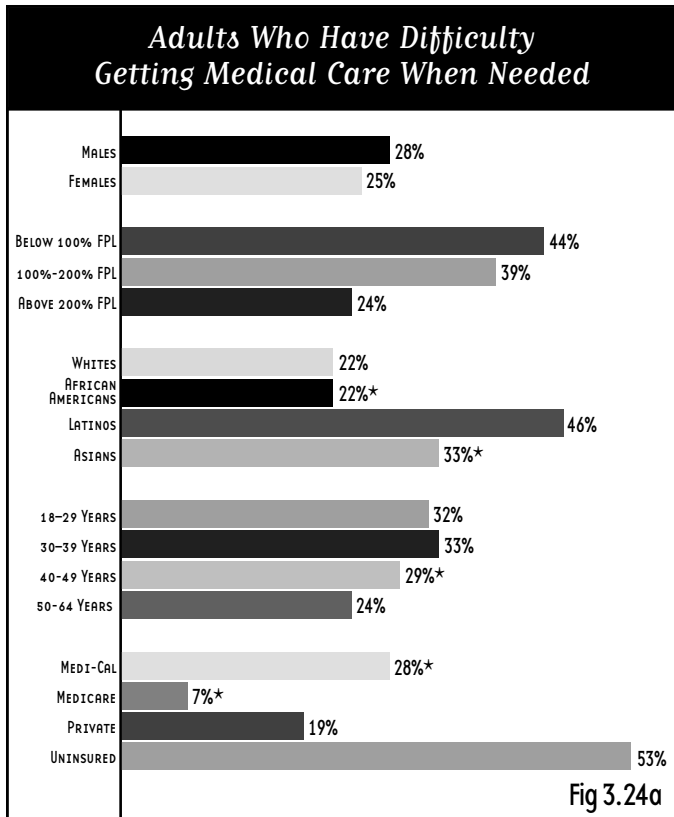
* For a family of four, the 1997 federal poverty level is \$16,050 a year and 200% of poverty is \$32,100.

* Adults 18 and older.

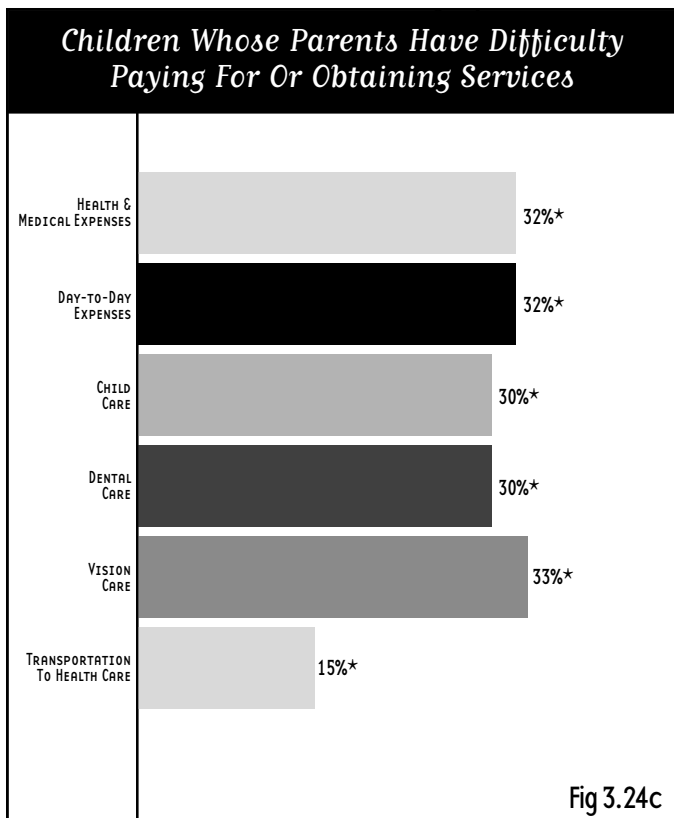


* Children 0-17 years.

* Prevalence for noted subgroup is based on small numbers (fewer than 30 respondents in the subgroup).

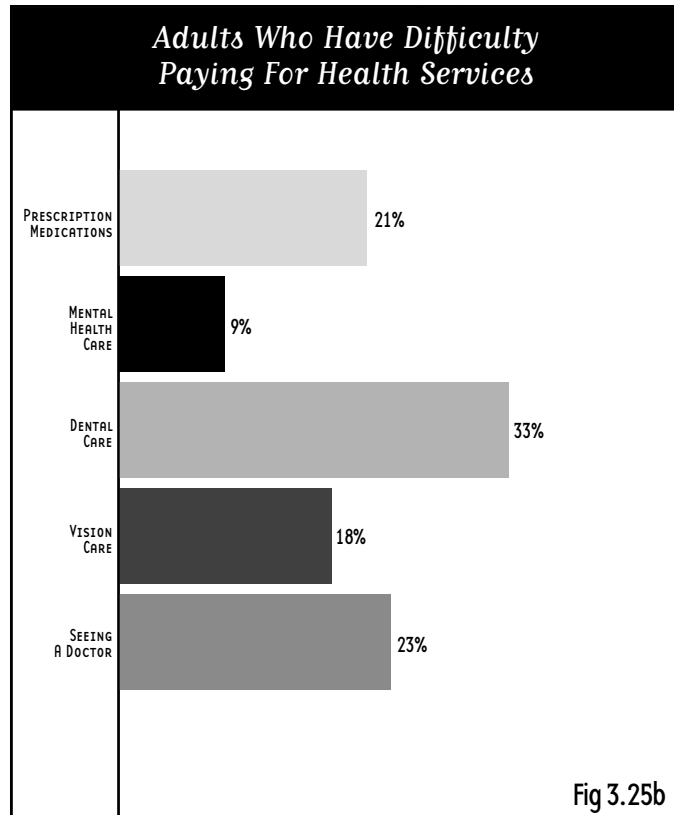
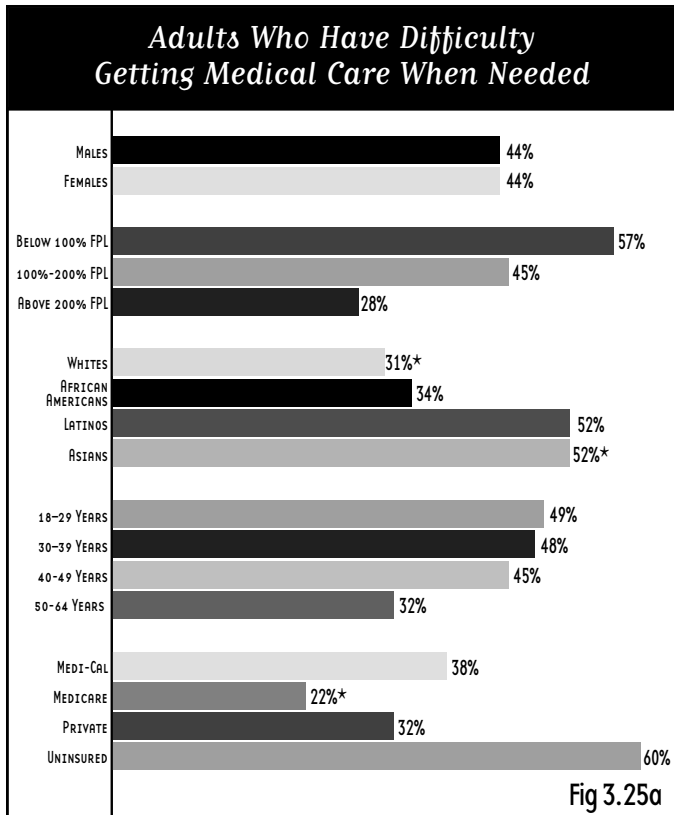


- For a family of four, the 1997 federal poverty level is \$16,050 a year and 200% of poverty is \$32,100.
- Adults 18 and older.



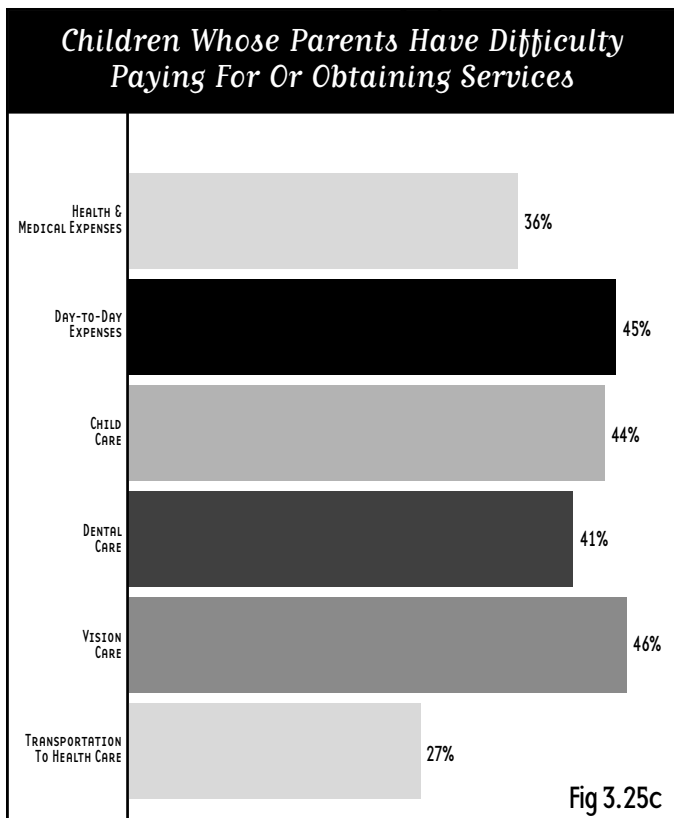
- Children 0-17 years.

* Prevalence for noted subgroup is based on small numbers (fewer than 30 respondents in the subgroup).



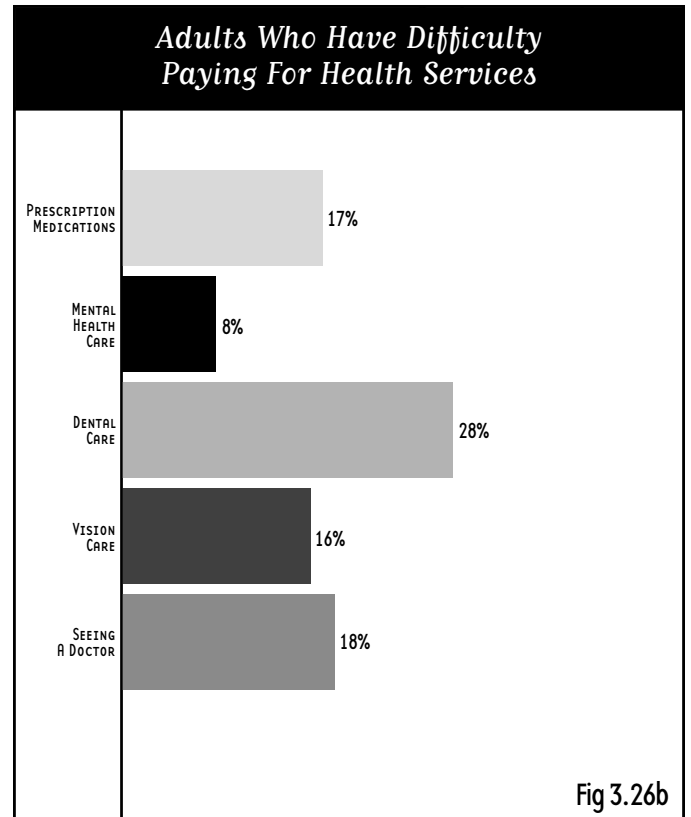
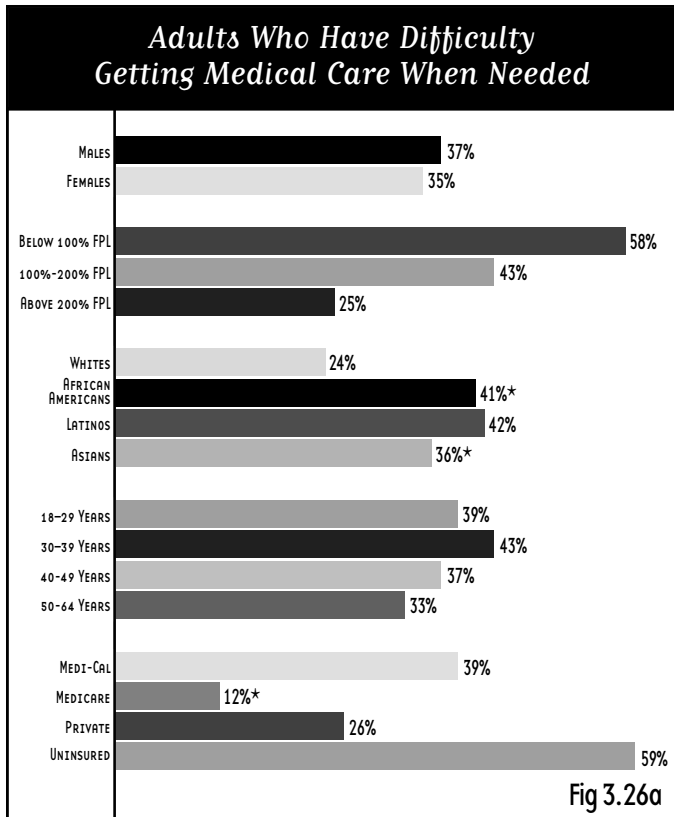
• For a family of four, the 1997 federal poverty level is \$16,050 a year and 200% of poverty is \$32,100.

• Adults 18 and older.

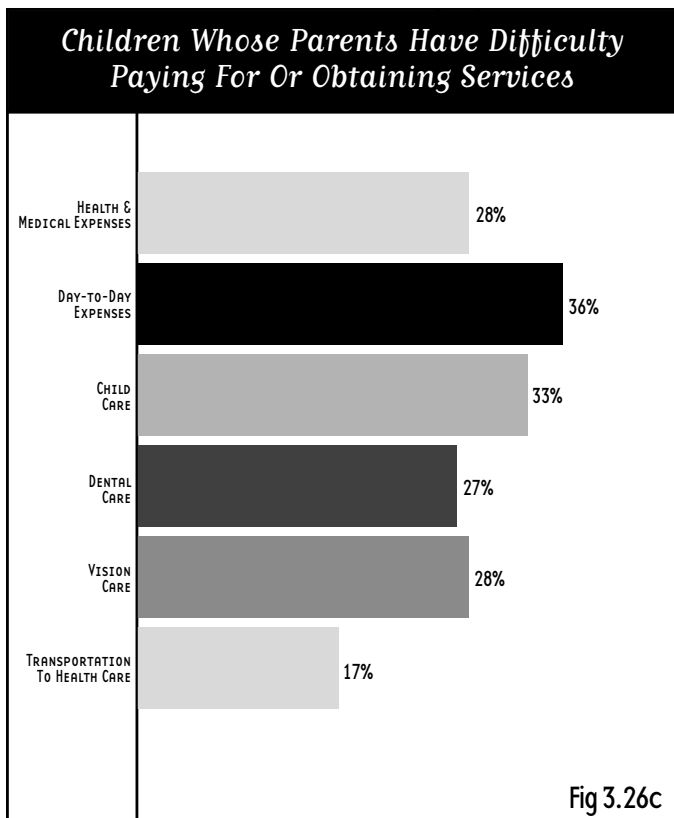


• Children 0-17 years.

* Prevalence for noted subgroup is based on small numbers (fewer than 30 respondents in the subgroup).

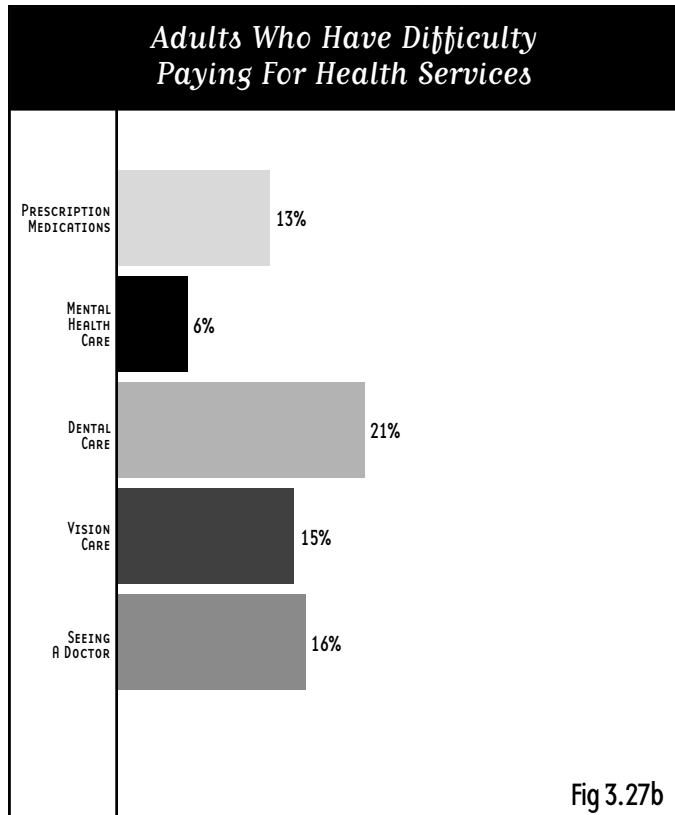
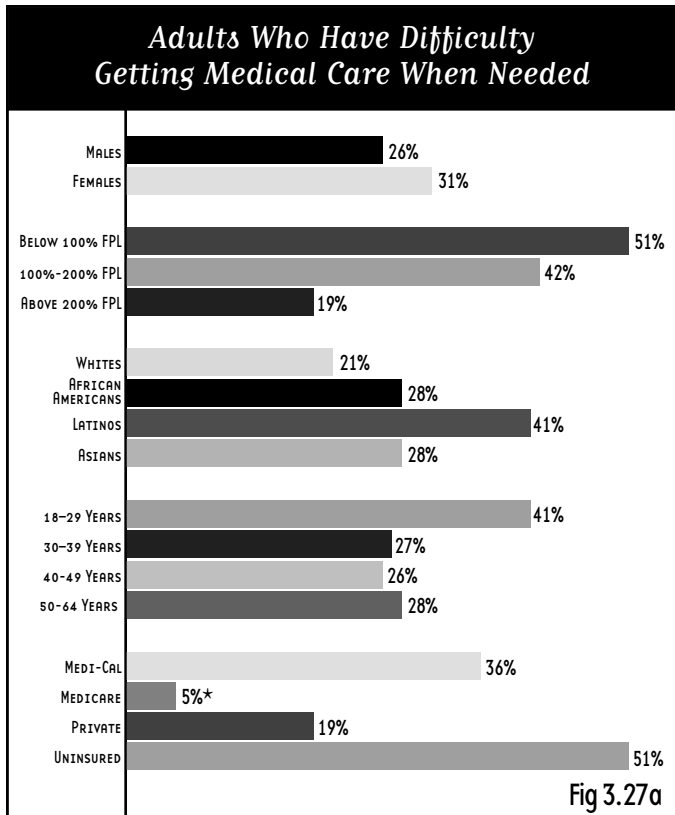


- For a family of four, the 1997 federal poverty level is \$16,050 a year and 200% of poverty is \$32,100.
- Adults 18 and older.



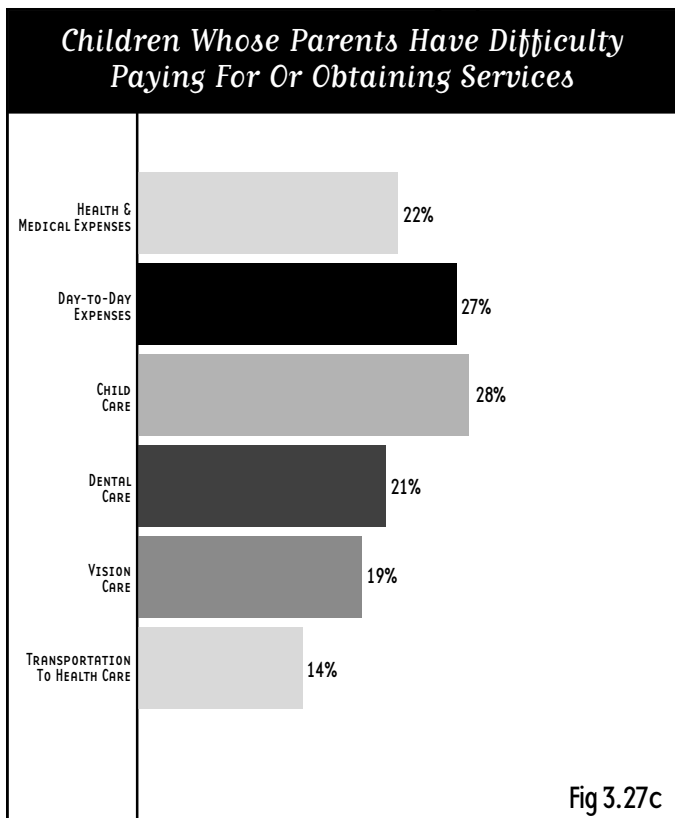
- Children 0-17 years.

* Prevalence for noted subgroup is based on small numbers (fewer than 30 respondents in the subgroup).



• For a family of four, the 1997 federal poverty level is \$16,050 a year and 200% of poverty is \$32,100.

• Adults 18 and older.



• Children 0-17 years.

* Prevalence for noted subgroup is based on small numbers (fewer than 30 respondents in the subgroup).