

## Why Isha Care?

During 2009, unemployment nationwide has skyrocketed. Just in the past two years, the rate of individuals without jobs has nearly doubled this year as compared to the past few years. Due to high individual premiums, it is impossible for most unemployed Americans to afford health care insurance, and in Warren county alone, the unemployment rate in October of this year has peaked at 12.5%<sup>(1)</sup>.

Even more alarming is that nearly one out of three (32.4%) Tennesseans went without health insurance for all or part of the 2008 -2009 period<sup>(2)</sup>. Despite the high rate of unemployment, of these nearly 75% were working during that period<sup>(2)</sup>. This means that most uninsured Tennesseans are working to support themselves and their families but are still unable to afford health insurance.

State Population <65	5,314,000
Number Uninsured	1,722,000
Percent Uninsured	32.4%

(2)

But there are also many people in the US living well below the poverty line, and the state of Tennessee is far above average – in 2006 the national average for people living below 125% poverty line was 16.6%, with Tennessee at nearly 20%<sup>(3)</sup>. That means one in five Tennessee residents are struggling to meet their basic necessities, and health insurance is far beyond their economic reach.

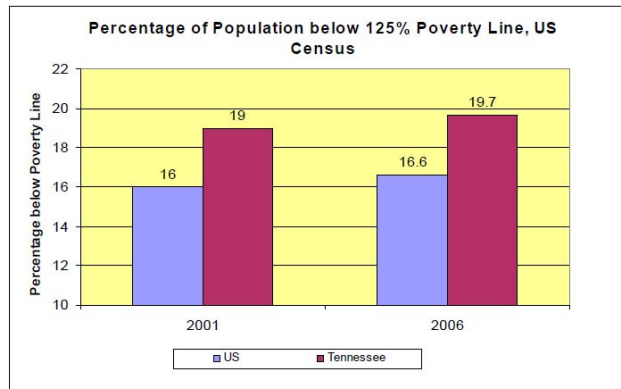
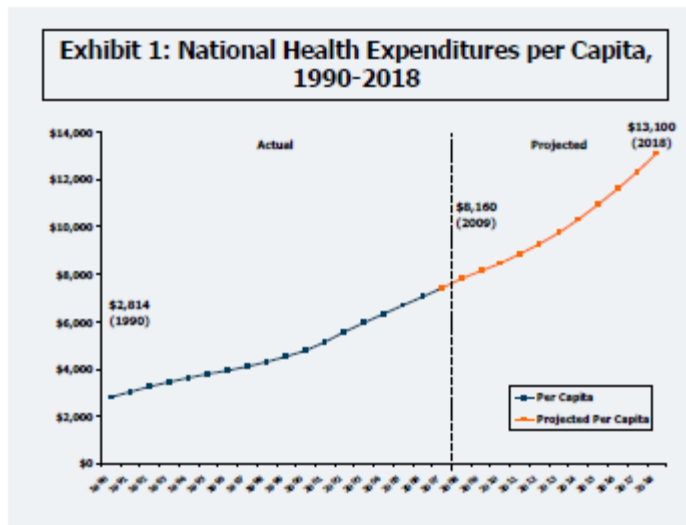


Figure 12. Percentage of Population below 125% of the Poverty Line.

(3)

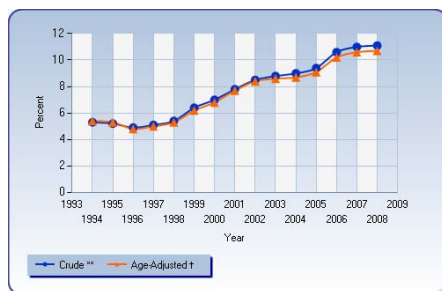
Compounding financial hardship of being able to afford adequate health care is the rising cost of health care in the United States. A recent report published by the Commonwealth Fund ranked the US *last* in quality of health care among developed countries, yet Americans are spending more than twice what other nations are spending on personal health care.<sup>(4)</sup> This means that we are paying much more and getting much less. In an average household, the cost of health care is often bigger than food and mortgage payments.



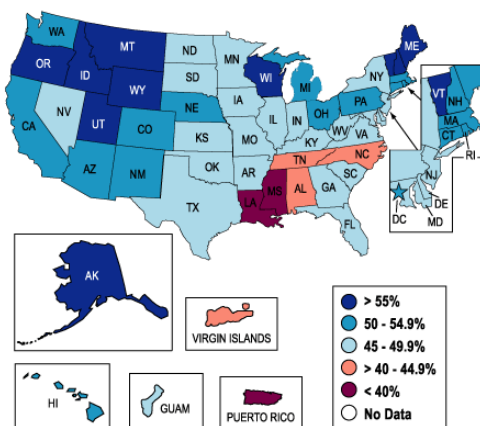
(4)

The health of Tennesseans is also on a rapid decline. There has been a dramatic increase in chronic and other illnesses such as diabetes, obesity, high blood-pressure, heart disease and cancer in recent years. Taking diabetes as an example, the total percentage of Adults diagnosed has nearly doubled in the last ten years alone.<sup>(5)</sup>

And in terms of physical activity, only 40% of Tennesseans were meeting the CDC minimum requirements\* in 2007, placing our state in the bottom five US states nation wide for activity.<sup>(6)</sup>



(5)



(6)

Percentage of Adults with Diagnosed Diabetes

2007 Prevalence of Recommended Physical Activity

## **What we're doing...**

Isha Care, a 501(c)3 tax-exempt charitable organization founded in September of 2008, is a grass roots effort in response to this growing need for health care. Its services are targeted toward the low income and recently unemployed residents of Warren and Van Buren counties who are unable to afford insurance.

The Isha Care clinic, currently operating out of Harrison Ferry CIC building, provides free doctor's exams and visits, discounted rates for prescription medication, referrals for discounted medical testing, and educational health counseling. The clinic puts an emphasis on total health, well-being and disease prevention with non-emergency medical treatments for a variety of common and easily treatable ailments.

As the Isha Care clinic continues to expand the scope of services, it has become necessary to establish a permanent location in order to provide better and more sustainable care for the residents of our community. The clinic is seen as a joint effort with local community leaders and volunteers to provide care to those who need it with minimal administrative costs and an unpaid volunteer workforce. For this reason, every dollar donated to Isha Care goes directly toward providing these services to those who have nowhere else to turn. We are seeking support in creating a basic facility to realize the full potential of the clinic.

## **About Isha Foundation**

Isha Foundation is a non-religious, not-for-profit, public service organization, which addresses all aspects of human wellbeing. Founded in Tennessee 1998, it continues to provide programs and services to throughout the United States. Isha Care is an outreach program to support the local community.

## **Contact Information**

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## **Sources**

**\*Recommended physical activity** is defined as reported moderate-intensity activities in a usual week (i.e., brisk walking, bicycling, vacuuming, gardening, or anything else that causes small increases in breathing or heart rate) for at least 30 minutes per day, at least 5 days per week; or vigorous-intensity activities in a usual week (i.e., running, aerobics, heavy yard work, or anything else that causes large increases in breathing or heart rate) for at least 20 minutes per day, at least 3 days per week or both. This can be accomplished through lifestyle activities (i.e., household, transportation, or leisure-time activities).

CDC Web Site [ <http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/PASurveillance/StateSumResultV.asp?Year=2007&State=46> ]

## Sources

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2. “The Uninsured: A closer look” Families USA, March 2009  
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4. British Medical Journal, July 21, 2008 [BMJ 2008;337:a889]  
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