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NEARLY ONE IN FOUR GAY AND LESBIAN ADULTS LACK HEALTH INSURANCE

New online study also shows gay and lesbian adults are almost twice as likely as their heterosexual counterparts to go without health insurance

Washington, DC – May 19, 2008 – According to a recent national survey conducted by Harris Interactive®, nearly one in four gay and lesbian adults lack health insurance and are nearly twice as likely as their heterosexual counterparts to have no health insurance coverage. When asked, 22 percent of gay and lesbian survey respondents reported having no health insurance, compared to only 12 percent of heterosexual adults in the survey.

The new nationwide [survey](#) of 2,710 U.S. adults, (ages 18 and over), of whom 343 self identified as gay or lesbian (which includes an oversample of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender adults), was conducted online between April 7 and 15, 2008, by Harris Interactive, a global market research and consulting firm, in conjunction with Witeck-Combs Communications, Inc., a strategic public relations and marketing communications firm with special expertise in the GLBT market.

“We know the problem of the uninsured has reached crisis proportions in this country and, unfortunately, this survey shows that the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) community is today at greater risk. What GLBT households and all Americans deserve and need is affordable access to quality health care that results in positive outcomes and facilitates prevention, wellness and chronic care coordination,” said Peter Francel CEBS, Head of Sales-Product Group for Aetna. “We must step up all efforts to serve the uninsured and take the lead in transforming our health care system for not only our GLBT members but all those who are not covered by health insurance today,” he added, noting that Aetna’s GLBT friendly workplace policies have earned the company a 100% score on the Human Rights Campaign Corporate Equality Index since 2002.

When asked about factors that influence their likelihood to consider specific health insurers, almost the same number of gay and lesbian adults said that it was important to them that the health insurance company provide domestic partner health coverage for companies to whom they supply health insurance (85%) and to their own employees (84%).

Also, 79 percent of gay and lesbian adults reported that seeing a print advertisement for a health insurance company that provides information about insurance products and speaks to gay persons with images of gay and lesbian people would be an important factor on their likelihood of considering the company’s health insurance products. Assuming factors such as price, quality, and convenience were not considerations, nearly 8 out of 10 (78 percent) gay and lesbian respondents said they would be likely to consider an insurance provider or plan that was marketing to the GLBT community and 67 percent said they would be likely to consider a health insurer if they knew that the agent selling the health insurance plan also was openly gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender.

“Studies consistently show that gay and lesbian consumers are far more likely to focus their spending on companies that sensitively and specifically reach out to them,” said Colleen Dermody, Vice President of Witeck-Combs Communications. “GLBT consumers place a high value on brands, including health insurance companies, that earn and grow respect within the community. GLBT consumers are among the most motivated to ‘vote’ with their dollars and to seek out brands they believe to be very friendly and supportive of the GLBT community.”

TABLE 1
HEALTH INSURANCE STATUS
 “Do you currently have health insurance?”

Base: All adults

	Gays and Lesbians	Heterosexuals
	%	%
Yes	78	88
No	22	12

TABLE 2
IMPORTANCE OF PROVIDING DOMESTIC PARTNER COVERAGE IN POLICIES

“Please indicate how important each of the following factors are in influencing your likelihood to consider a specific company’s health insurance products.

The health insurance company provides domestic partner coverage products in plans offered by major corporations to their own employees.”

Base: All adults

	Gays and Lesbians
	%
IMPORTANT (NET)	85
(1) Very Important	61
(2)	16
(3)	9
NOT IMPORTANT (NET)	7
(4)	3
(5) Not at all important	5
Not sure	8

TABLE 3

IMPORTANCE OF PROVIDING DOMESTIC PARTNER BENEFITS TO OWN EMPLOYEES

“Please indicate how important each of the following factors are in influencing your likelihood to consider a specific company’s health insurance products.

The health insurance company provides domestic partner benefits to its own employees.”

Base: All adults

	Gays and Lesbians
	%
IMPORTANT (NET)	84
(1) Very Important	61
(2)	17
(3)	6
NOT IMPORTANT (NET)	9
(4)	5
(5) Not at all important	5
Not sure	7

TABLE 4

IMPORTANCE OF SEEING PRINT ADS TAILORED TO GAYS AND LESBIANS

“Please indicate how important each of the following factors are in influencing your likelihood to consider a specific company’s health insurance products.

Seeing a print advertisement for the health insurance company that provides general information about its insurance products and speaks to gay persons with images of gay and lesbian people and/or tailored wording.”

Base: All adults

	Gays and Lesbians
	%
IMPORTANT (NET)	79
(1) Very Important	30
(2)	34
(3)	15
NOT IMPORTANT (NET)	12
(4)	6
(5) Not at all important	6
Not sure	8

TABLE 5

LIKELIHOOD OF CHOOSING INSURANCE COMPANY DUE TO GLBT MARKETING

“Assuming issues like price, quality and convenience were not factors in your decision, if an insurance provider or plan had each of the following conditions, how likely would you be to consider an insurance provider or plan.

You knew that a specific health insurance provider was marketing to the GLBT (gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender) community.”

Base: All adults

	Gays and Lesbians
	%
LIKELY (NET)	78
Extremely likely	39
Very likely	22
Likely	17
NOT LIKELY (NET)	15
Somewhat likely	12
Not at all likely	3
Not sure	7

TABLE 6

LIKELIHOOD OF CHOOSING INSURANCE COMPANY DUE TO GLBT MARKETING

“Assuming issues like price, quality and convenience were not factors in your decision, if an insurance provider or plan had each of the following conditions, how likely would you be to consider an insurance provider or plan.

You knew that the agent selling you a specific health insurance plan were openly gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender.”

Base: All adults

	Gays and Lesbians
	%
LIKELY (NET)	67
Extremely likely	26
Very likely	20
Likely	21
NOT LIKELY (NET)	21
Somewhat likely	16
Not at all likely	6
Not sure	12

Methodology

Harris Interactive conducted the study online within the United States between April 7 and 15, 2008, among 2,710 adults (ages 18 and over), of whom 2,303 indicated they are heterosexual and 343 self-identified as gay or lesbian (this includes an over-sample of GLBT adults). No estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated. A full [methodology and data tables](#) are available at www.harrisinteractive.com.

About Witeck-Combs Communications, Inc.

[Witeck-Combs Communications, Inc.](#) is the nation’s premier marketing communications and consulting firm, specializing in developing and implementing effective strategies reaching the gay and lesbian consumer market. With 15 years experience in this unique market, Witeck-Combs Communications not only serves as a bridge between corporate America and gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender consumers (GLBT), but also provides counsel to countless non-profit organizations that aim to educate the public on gay and lesbian issues or to better reach their GLBT membership.

In April 2003, American Demographics magazine identified Bob Witeck and Wes Combs as two of 25 experts over the last 25 years who have made significant contributions to the fields of demographics, market research, media and trendspotting for their path breaking work on the gay and lesbian market, and in 2006 Bob Witeck and Wes Combs co-authored Business Inside Out: Capturing Millions of Brand Loyal Gay Consumers (Kaplan Publishing), considered the first-ever book on marketing insights, practical tips and strategies targeting the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender market. They have appeared in worldwide media outlets including Fortune, CNBC, CNN, Reuters, Associated Press, Ad Age, New York Times and Washington Post. For more information visit www.witeckcombs.com.

About Harris Interactive

[Harris Interactive](#) is a global leader in custom market research. With a long and rich history in multimodal research, powered by our science and technology, we assist clients in achieving business results. Harris Interactive serves clients globally through our North American, European and Asian offices and a network of independent market research firms.

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