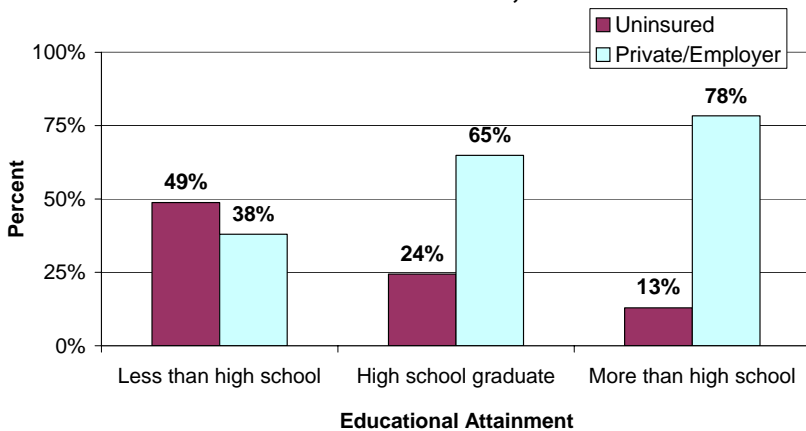


Health Care Status Strongly Influenced by Adult Educational Attainment

Chart 1. Insurance Status of Working-Age Colorado Adults (Ages 18-64), by Educational Attainment, 2002-04



The escalating cost of health care is a major public policy issue. Of particular concern is the cost of providing health care to the uninsured and those on Medicaid.

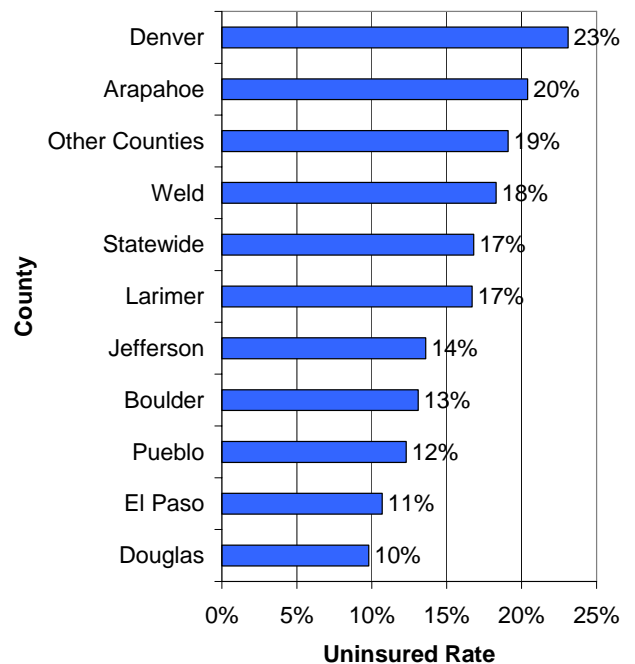
In Colorado, as elsewhere, the powerful impact of adult educational attainment on the insurance status of workers is dramatic.

- Half (49%) of working-age Coloradans with less than a high school education are uninsured, compared to only a quarter (24%) of those with high school diplomas, and one out of eight (13%) with more than a high school education.

- Conversely, three-quarters of those with more than a high school education have private or employer-provided health coverage, compared to only two-thirds (65%) of high school graduates, and one-third (38%) of those with less than a high school diploma. (See Chart 1.)

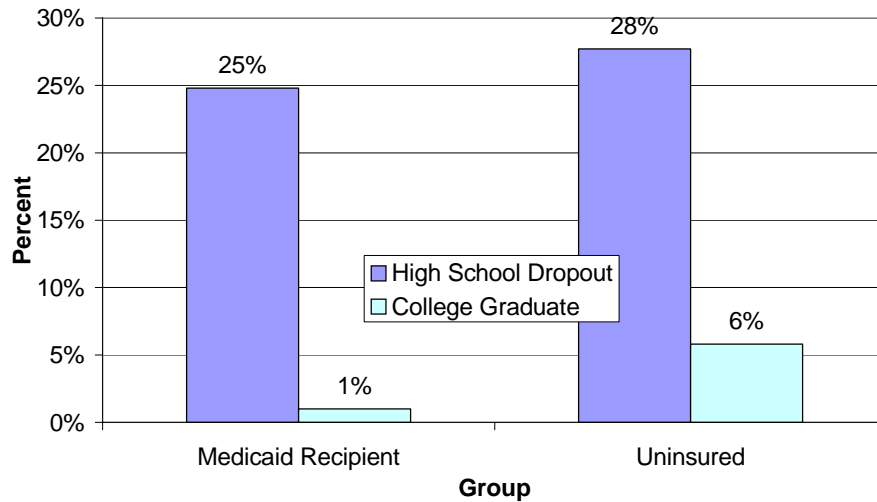
The strong negative impact of low educational attainment on health care status is especially problematic, given the double-digit uninsured rates for Colorado's metropolitan counties. (See Chart 2.)

Chart 2. Average Uninsured Rates by Colorado Counties, 2002-04



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**Chart 3. Medicaid Recipients and Uninsured
by Educational Attainment, U.S., 2003**



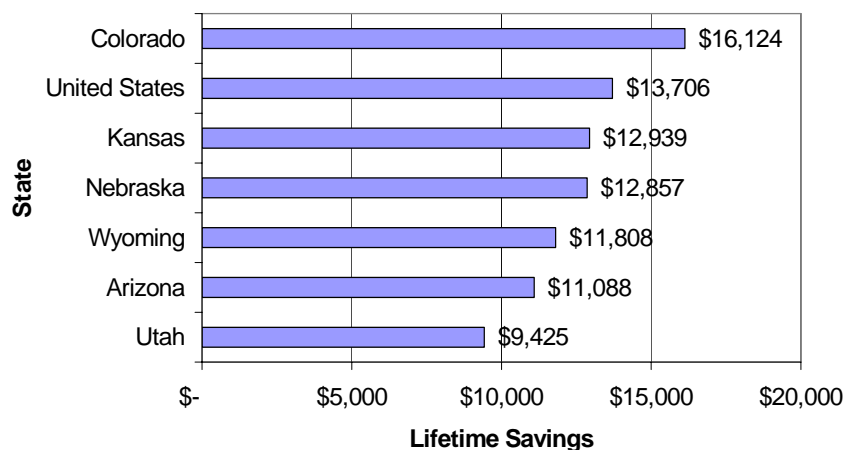
National data further demonstrate that, compared to college graduates, high school dropouts are exponentially more likely to be both uninsured and Medicaid recipients. (See Chart 3.)

The cost to states of providing health care to these two groups—the uninsured and Medicaid recipients—are staggering. Consider the cost to states associated with a single high school graduating class. The savings to states—for Colorado and neighboring states—range from about \$10,000 to over \$16,000 per additional graduate.

For Colorado alone, the total savings to the state would be \$280 million. (Nationally, such savings are estimated at over \$17 billion.)

Even among the general adult population, educational attainment is a strong predictor of basic knowledge about health and the health care system. The National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL) tested the health literacy of adults in 2003, and found that health literacy scores increased steadily with level of education. (See Chart 5.)

**Chart 4. Total Lifetime Health Savings to State
if All Class of 2005-06 Students Graduated,
Colorado & Neighboring States**



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Doing a better job of educating students—at whatever age—could save the state hundreds of millions of dollars per year on health care alone. Clearly, adult education and family literacy programs are wise investments, both in the interest of state fiscal policy and the impact on the health and well-being of Coloradans.

