



# Trends in Access to Health Care for Workers with Disabilities, 1997-2011

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**DISABILITY POLICY**



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# Background and Policy Problem

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- **Significant emphasis has been placed on competitive employment for workers with disabilities over the past two decades**
- **Workers with disabilities may have complex health needs and need access to care to continue working**
- **Employment is innately tied to health insurance coverage in the United States**
  - **Potential gain of private coverage from employer**
  - **Potential loss of public coverage if work too much**



# Research Questions

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- **Do workers with disabilities report the same access to health care as their non-disabled counterparts?**
- **To what extent do differences in characteristics between workers with and without disabilities explain observed access disparities across these groups?**
- **How have these disparities changed over time, and what factors explain that change?**

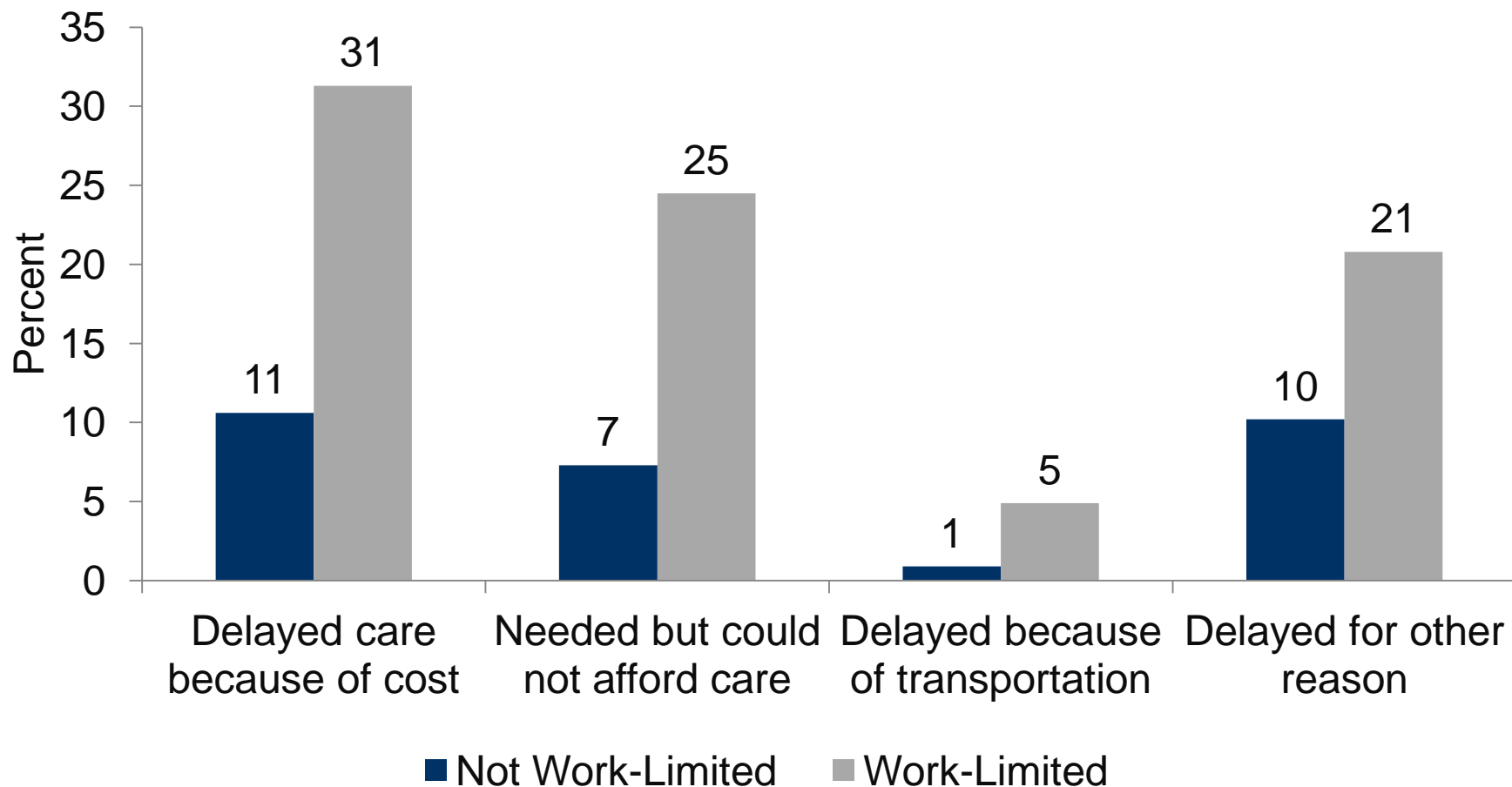


# Data and Sample Selection

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- **Integrated Health Interview Survey, 1997-2011**
  - Derived from the National Health Interview Survey
  - Cross-wave consistent measures of key variables
- **Sample includes individuals age 18-64 who report being employed for pay**
- **Sample stratified by disability status**
  - Self-report of a health condition that limits work
- **Assessed health care access barriers related to costs, transportation, and other factors**

# Access barriers are reported more often by workers with disabilities



Source: Analysis of 2009-2011 National Health Interview Survey (NHIS)

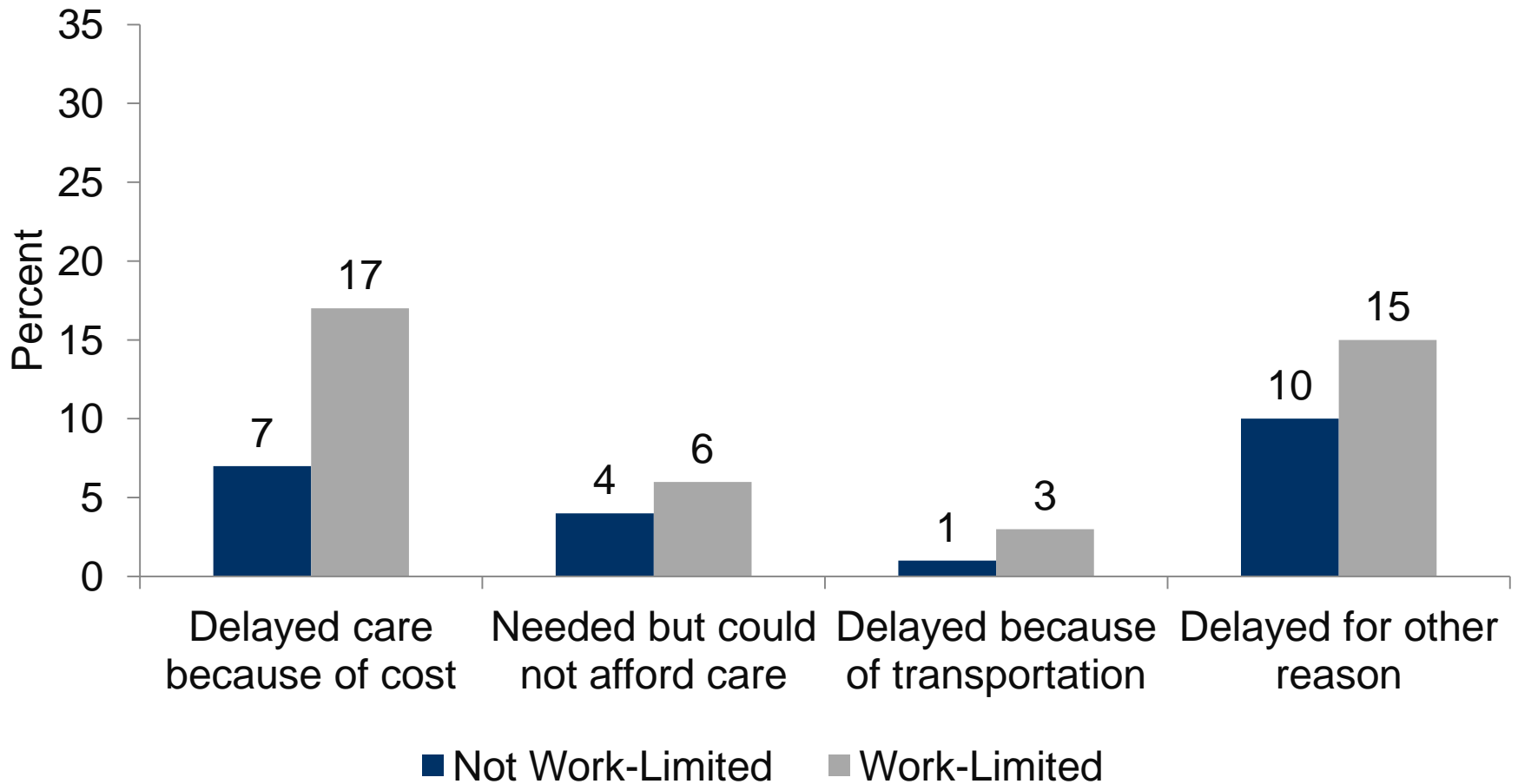


# Workers with disabilities are different than their non-disabled counterparts

	Not Work-Limited	Work-Limited
Age 45-64	41	62
Health is very good/excellent	71	28
Income < 100% FPL	8	14
Income > 400% FPL	47	34
Employed full-time	79	56
Has employer-sponsored health insurance	69	56
Has public health insurance	7	22
Uninsured	18	20

Source: Analysis of 2009-2011 National Health Interview Survey (NHIS)

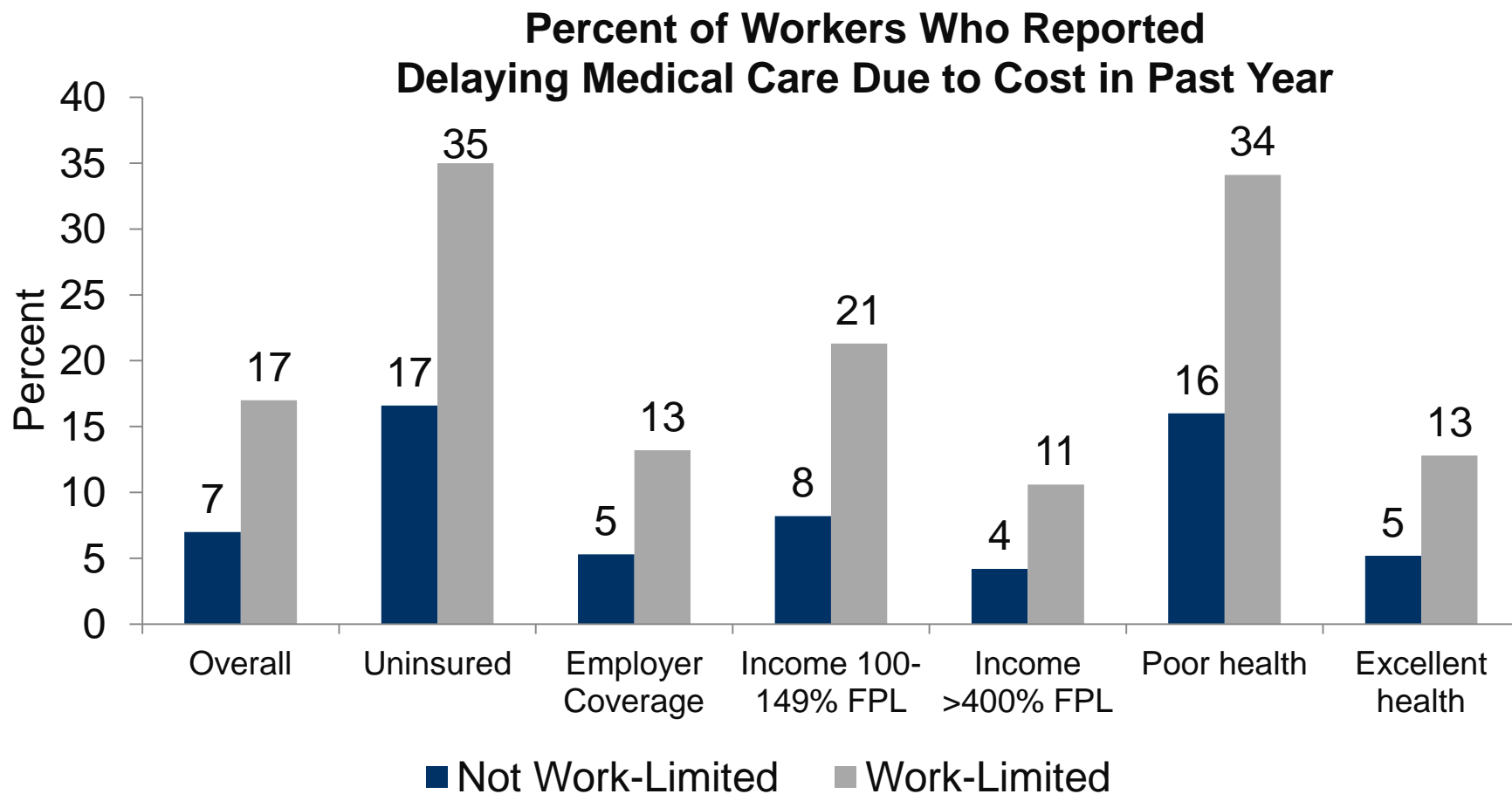
# Gaps in access narrow but persist after controlling for characteristics



Source: Analysis of 2009-2011 National Health Interview Survey (NHIS)



# Access Difficulties Vary by Characteristic, But Relative Difference Persists

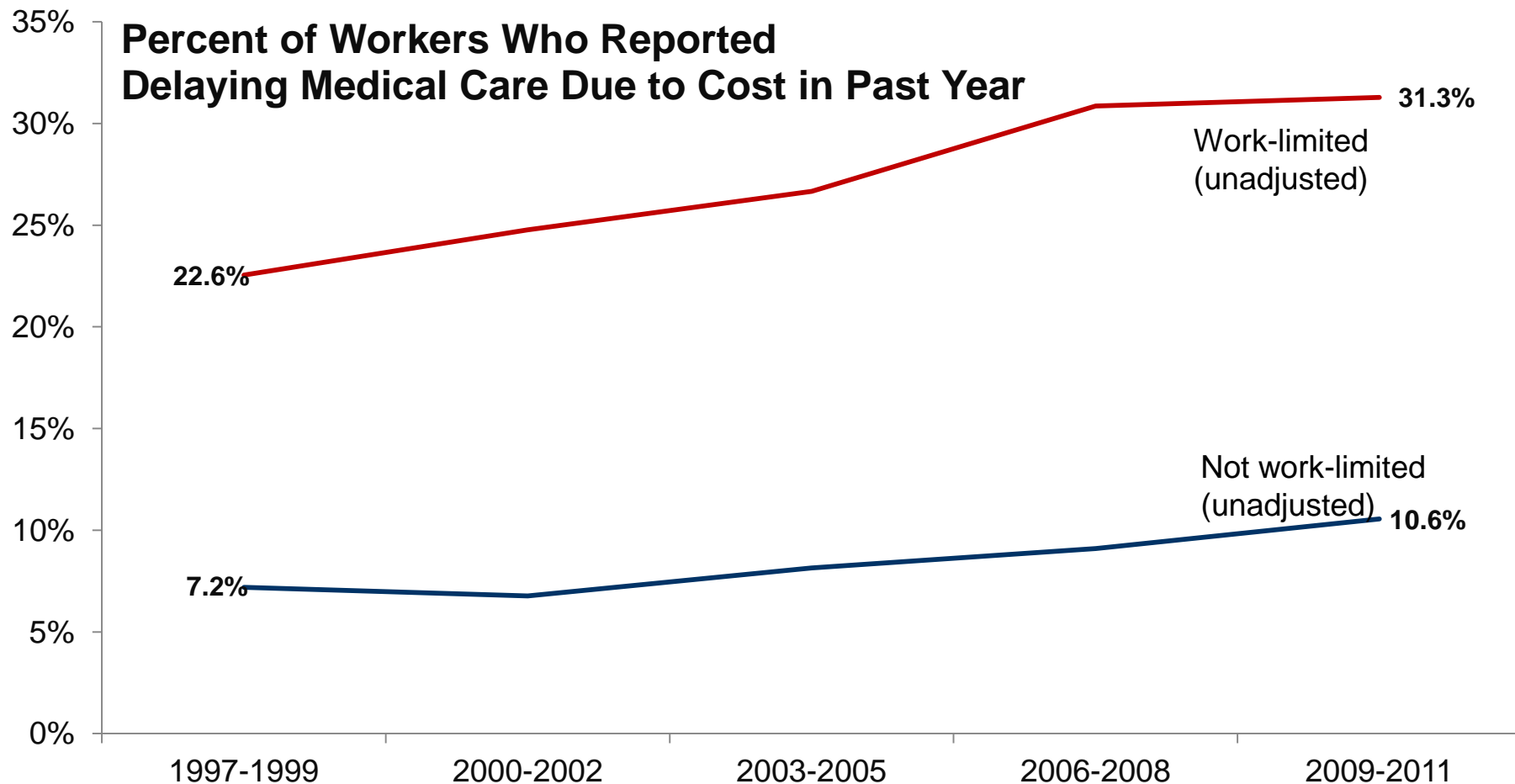


Source: Analysis of 2009-2011 National Health Interview Survey (NHIS)





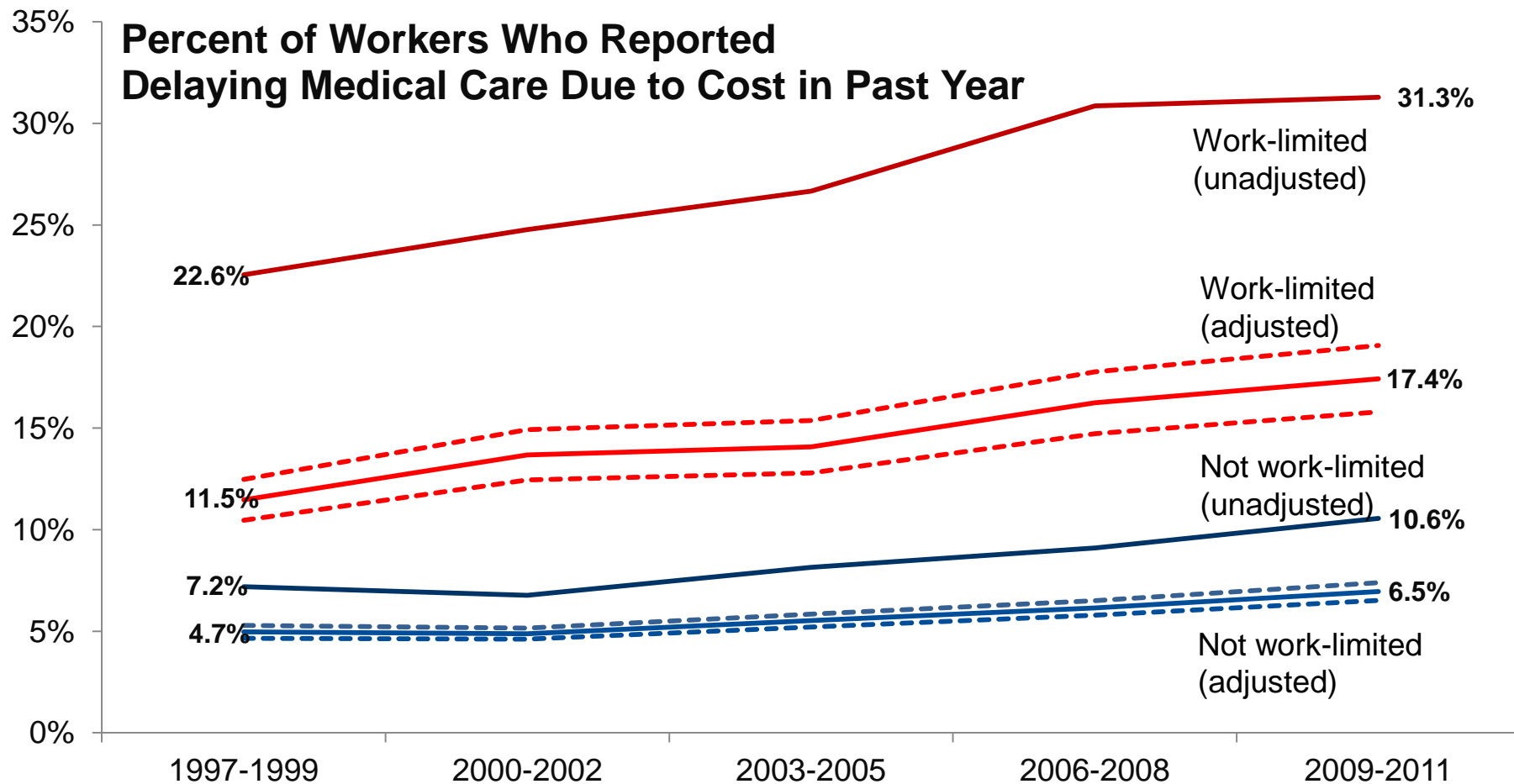
# Access to care gaps by disability status have not gotten smaller over time



Source: Analysis of 1997-2011 National Health Interview Survey (NHIS)



# Access to care gaps by disability status have not gotten smaller over time



Source: Analysis of 1997-2011 National Health Interview Survey (NHIS)



# Summary of Current Findings

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- **Workers with disabilities report high levels of difficulty accessing care relative to their non-disabled counterparts**
  - Gaps persist after controlling for differences in characteristics across the groups
- **In proportional terms, gaps relative to non-disabled counterparts are not smaller for workers with disabilities who have health insurance or high income**
- **Access to care disparities have not gotten smaller in past 15 years**



# Analysis in Progress: Digging Deeper Into Observed Trends

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- **Population of workers with disabilities has changed over past 15 years; how has this affected access?**
  - Use 1997-1999 group characteristics to predict what access would have been in 2009-2011 without changes in the population
- **How does utilization among workers based on disability status?**
  - Are the services that workers with disabilities are more likely to use also more costly (or not covered by insurance), or is it simply an issue of volume?

# Analysis in Progress: Role of Employment Characteristics

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- **Workers with disabilities are more likely to work part-time, in smaller firms, be paid hourly, have paid sick time, and in certain industries and occupations**
- **How do access disparities differ after controlling for differences in the nature of employment between workers with and without disabilities?**
- **Cross-sectional analysis; data only available from 2006-2011**



# How Might the ACA Change the Picture?

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- **Features of the ACA salient to workers with disabilities:**
  - Medicaid expansion for those with incomes <138% FPL (in some states)
  - Purchase coverage on the exchange
  - Subsidies for those with income <400% FPL
  - Small firms exempt from requirement to provide coverage
- **We will explore whether and how workers with disabilities might be affected by these changes**

# Contact Information

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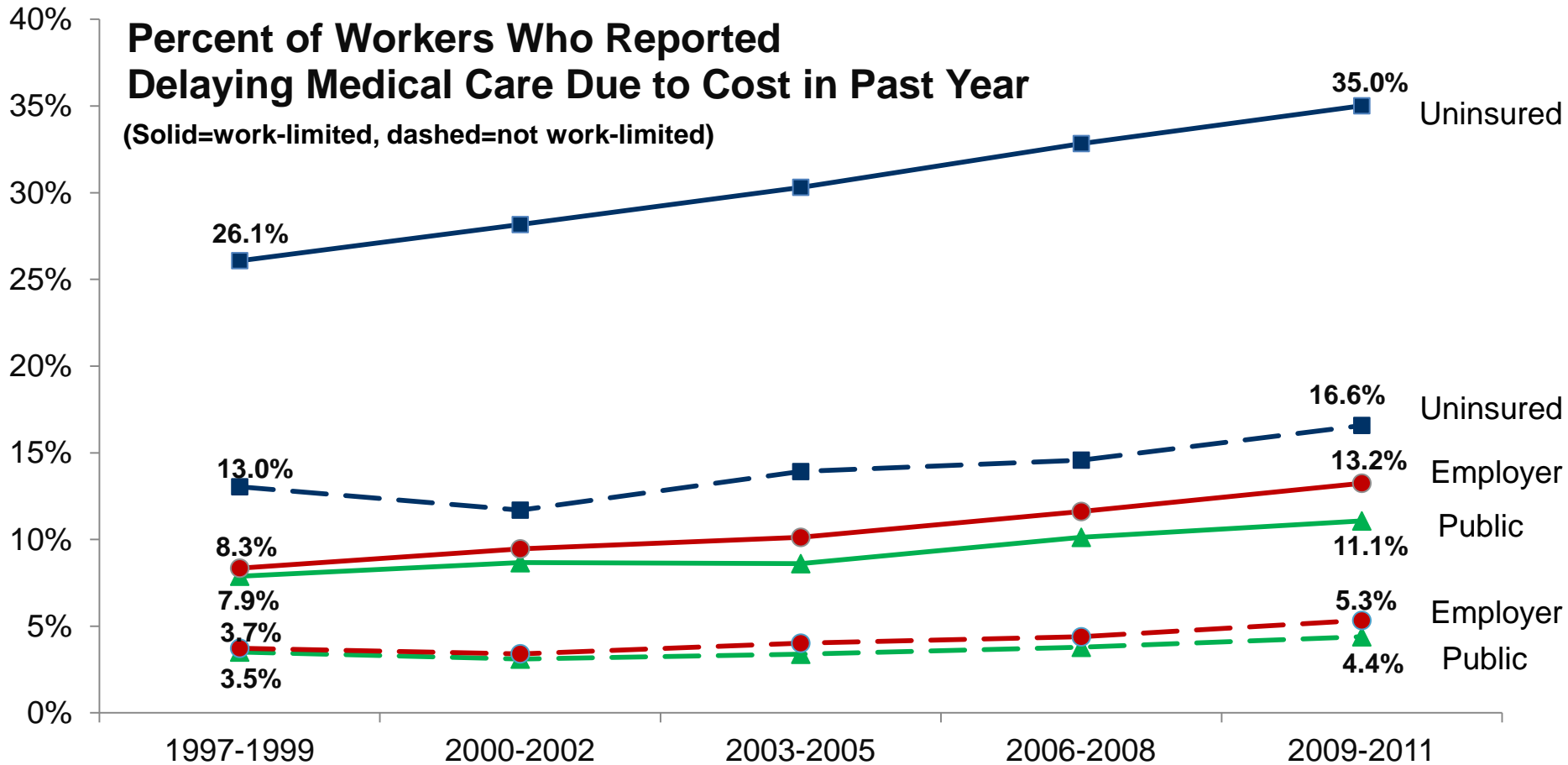
**[www.DisabilityPolicyResearch.org](http://www.DisabilityPolicyResearch.org)**

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# Extra Slides Showing Trends Over Time, Holding Individual Characteristics Constant

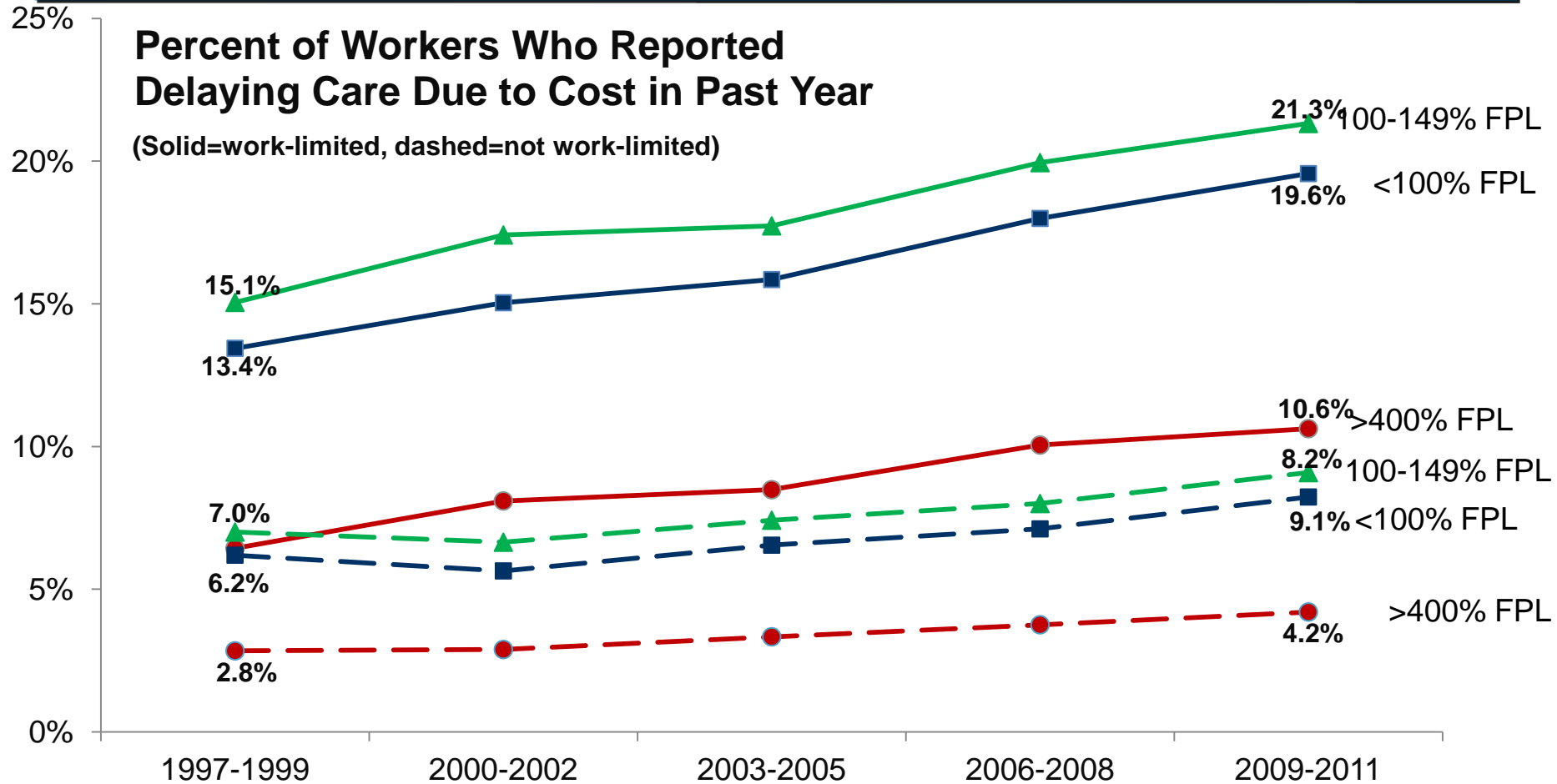


# Gaps Remain When Holding Health Insurance Constant



Source: Analysis of 1997-2011 National Health Interview Survey (NHIS)

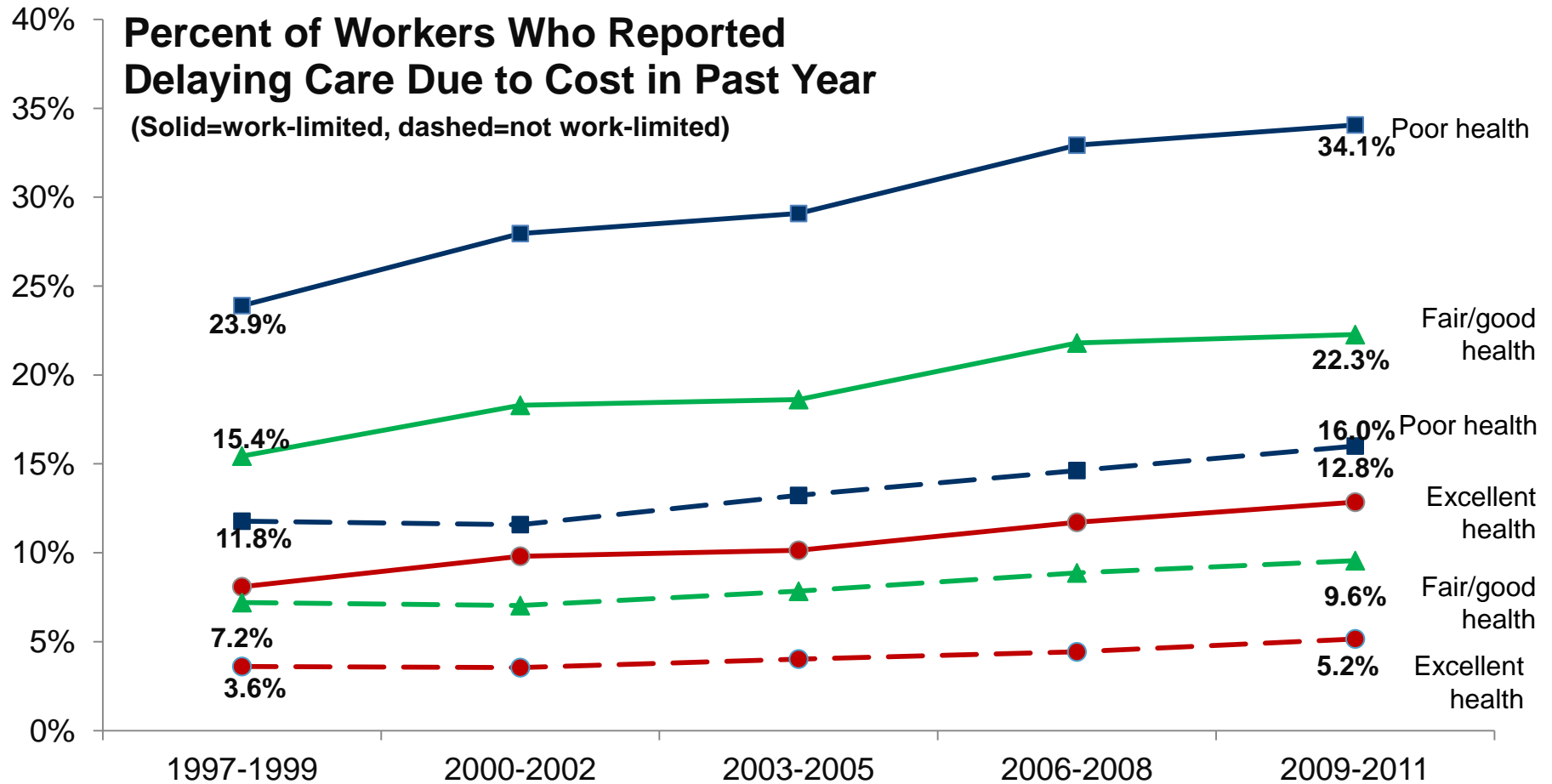
# Gaps Remain When Holding Income Relative to FPL Constant



Source: Analysis of 1997-2011 National Health Interview Survey (NHIS)

Note: FPL=Federal Poverty Guideline

# Gaps Remain When Holding Self-Reported Health Status Constant



Source: Analysis of 1997-2011 National Health Interview Survey (NHIS)