Tips on Using Bullet Lists for Statistics

1. Numbers are hard to understand. Translate them into terms like _percent_ or _One in six_.

2. To make a bullet list, you need at least THREE items or numbers. You will seldom use more than five.

3. Choose the statistics carefully – they should be the KEY numbers for understanding the problem, for painting a vivid picture of how widespread or serious something is.

4. Introduce the bullet list with a _Set-Up sentence (followed by a colon)._

5. In BJ, the bullet list (of numbers or points you're making) will be a graphic.

6. In Print, the bullet list of statistics will probably be linked with/close to the nut graf. The numbers are the EVIDENCE of the ISSUE/PROBLEM.

7. The bullet list may also be a print graphic/info box.

8. Use parallel structure for the list (Begin every item with a noun or with a verbal – don't mix the two).

9. You rarely want more than two bullet lists in a story.

Example 1

Consider these statistics, from the Census Bureau:
- Nationally, one in six Americans – or 47 million – lack health insurance
- In Onondaga County, the gap is even greater, with one in four residents without health insurance.
- The majority of the uninsured are children.
- Nationally, that's 33 million children. In Onondaga County, that's 500,000 children.

Example 2

Some key statistics:
- 58 percent of Americans, says the Census Bureau, are fat.
- 44 percent of overweight children are diabetics, calculates the American Diabetes Association.
- 22 percent of overweight adults have had heart attacks, reports the American Heart Association.

-30-