Mayra Pineda-Torres
2250 Dartmouth St.
College Station, TX. 77840

October 5, 2019

The National Bureau of Economic Research
1050 Massachusetts Ave.,
Cambridge, MA 02138

Dear reviewers:

Please accept this letter and the attached documents as an indication of my sincere interest in attending the Health Economics Research Boot Camp for Graduate Students.

Attending the boot camp is very appealing to me because it will allow me to interact and learn from experts in the field, and it will give me the chance to network with other students with similar interests. I believe I am a suitable candidate given my research interests and ongoing work studying the health and economic implications of family planning and reproductive health access on women and their families.

I am a fourth-year of the Ph.D. in Economics program at Texas A&M University. I have taken the core and the field courses, so I am currently focused on my research projects. My advisor and recommendation letter writer, Jason Lindo, has been great at introducing me to policies on reproductive health. The courses I have taken so far, and Prof. Lindo's expertise on causal inference have been useful to develop research on health topics. However, I have never been exposed to any health economics course. Therefore, the boot camp can be an excellent opportunity to learn about this field in more detail, and also study the intersection of health economics with fields such as industrial organization and behavioral economics.

I can be reached any time via email at mayrabpinedat16@tamu.edu or by cell phone, (979) 402-5714.

I am eager to learn from the speakers' expertise in different topics on health. I hope that you will afford me the opportunity to attend the boot camp. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Mayra Pineda-Torres

MAYRA PINEDA-TORRES

October 2019

Department of Economics
Texas A&M University
College Station, TX 77843-4228

mayrabpinedat16@tamu.edu
979-402-5714

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Health, Gender, Public/Labor Economics, Education, Development

EDUCATION

Fall 2016 - Spring 2021	Ph.D., Economics Texas A&M University, College Station	Texas, U.S.A.
Spring 2015	B.A. Economics (with honors) Instituto Tecnologico Autonomo de Mexico Thesis: *Sheepskin Effect on the Returns to Education. The Case of Mexico*	Mexico City, Mexico

PUBLICATIONS

Working Paper

2019 "New Evidence on Mandatory Waiting Periods on Abortion" (NBER Working Paper No. 26228. Joint with Jason Lindo)

Work in Progress

2019 "Planning parenthood? The Implications of Abortion Legalization and Plan B for Contraception Use"

2019 "The Effects of Early Access to Contraception on Women's Long-Run Outcomes (Joint with Jason Lindo, David Pritchard, and Hedieh Tajali)

2019 "Different Access to Abortion and Women's Empowerment" (Joint with Sofia Amaral and Aixa Garcia-Ramos)

2019 "The Economic Effects of Restrictions on Abortion Providers" (Joint with Kelly M. Jones)

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Summer 2018	Research Assistant, Prof. Ragan Petrie, Texas A&M University	Texas, U.S.A.
Fall 2017	Research Assistant, Prof. Jason Lindo, Texas A&M University	Texas, U.S.A.
Summer 2017	Summer Student Researcher, Dr. Juan Contreras, Monetary and Economic Department, BIS	Mexico City, Mexico
2013 – 2016	Research Assistant, Directorate General of Economic Research, Bank of Mexico	Mexico City, Mexico

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Teaching Assistant, Texas A&M University

Spring 2019	ECMT 676. Applied Econometrics (with recitations. Score: 5/5)	Texas, U.S.A.
Fall 2018	ECON 412. Public Finance	Texas, U.S.A.
Spring 2018	ECMT 463. Introduction to Econometrics (with recitations. Score 4.46/5)	Texas, U.S.A.
Spring 2017	ECON 412. Public Finance	Texas, U.S.A.

OTHER EXPERIENCE

2012 - 2015	Editorial Board Member, *Caeteris Paribus* Instituto Tecnologico Autonomo de Mexico	Mexico City, Mexico
2012 - 2013	Vice President, Financial Association Instituto Tecnologico Autonomo de Mexico	Mexico City, Mexico

WORKSHOPS AND CONFERENCES (scheduled*)

Fall 2019	APPAM 41st Annual Research Conference (presentation*)	Colorado, U.S.A.
Fall 2019	SEA 89th Annual Meeting (presentation*)	Florida, U.S.A.
Summer 2019	ASHEcon 8th Annual Conference (presentation)	D.C., U.S.A.
Summer 2019	WEAI 94th Annual Conference (presentation)	California, U.S.A.
Spring 2019	5th Applied Economics Research Symposium (presentation)	Texas, U.S.A.
Spring 2019	EEA 4th Annual Conference 2019 (presentation)	New York, U.S.A.
Fall 2018	Annual Health Economics Conference, Texas A&M University (attendee)	Texas, U.S.A.
Fall 2018	ASHE Conference, Texas A&M University (attendee)	Texas, U.S.A.
Fall 2018	Graduate Student Summit for Diversity in Economics, Women in Economics, University of California, Berkeley (attendee)	California, U.S.A.
Fall 2018	MEER Workshop, Texas A&M University (attendee)	Texas, U.S.A.
Fall 2018	Stata Texas Empirical Microeconomics Conference, Baylor University (attendee)	Texas, U.S.A.
Fall 2017	ASHE Conference, Texas A&M University (attendee)	Texas, U.S.A.

AWARDS

Fall 2019	2019 IWPR Doctoral Fellow in Economics & Reproductive Health	D.C, U.S.A.
Summer 2019	Summer Fellowship. Private Enterprise Research Center, Texas A&M University	Texas, U.S.A.
Summer 2019	2019 ASHEcon Diversity Scholarship	D.C., U.S.A.
Summer 2018	Summer Fellowship. Private Enterprise Research Center, Texas A&M University	Texas, U.S.A.
Fall 2016	La Flecha al Aire Award, Best Undergraduate Thesis, Instituto Tecnologico Autonomo de Mexico	Mexico City, Mexico
2016 – 2021	Graduate Assistantship, Department of Economics, Texas A&M University	Texas, U.S.A.
2008 - 2011	Academic Scholarship, Instituto Tecnologico Autonomo de Mexico	Mexico City, Mexico

LANGUAGES

English (fluent), Spanish (native)

COURSES

Microeconomic Theory I and II
Macroeconomic Theory I and II
Econometrics I and II
Applied Microeconometrics
Public Economics I and II
Industrial Organization I
Experimental Economics
Behavioral Game Theory
Field Experiments

REFERENCES

Jason Lindo
Texas A&M University
Department of Economics
Professor of Economics
jlindo@tamu.edu

Mark Hoekstra
Texas A&M University
Department of Economics
Professor of Economics
markhoekstra@tamu.edu

Steve Puller
Texas A&M University
Department of Economics
Professor of Economics
spuller@tamu.edu

Joanna N. Lahey
Texas A&M University
The Bush School
Associate Professor
jlahey@tamu.edu

Participating in the Health Economics Research Boot Camp for Graduate Students is an excellent opportunity to improve my theoretical background in health economics through the interaction with great researchers in the field. Furthermore, it would also provide me with the chance to meet people with similar research interests that could end up in future collaborations.

Health economics is a fundamental field of economics because it allows us to understand and evaluate policies and market interventions that affect health care and economic outcomes. In many courses, we usually focus on the interactions of the demand and supply of tangible goods. However, health is a good that is barely presented in classes, that could affect or limit the ability of a decision-maker to participate in any other market.

One of the most appealing aspects of health economics is that it is a field that easily intersects with other fields, which provides excellent opportunities for collaboration among scholars. For instance, an IO economist may be interested in topics such as the supply of medicines and health care from a more structural background. Another applied microeconomist may be interested in studying a policy that regulates the provision of health care. Even though the backgrounds of these two economists may be different, they could collaborate with a similar research agenda in health economics, since both are ultimately studying the available health resources.

I am a health economist that would fall into the second category described above. I do applied microeconomics research that focuses on policies that affect the demand and supply of reproductive health. I am mainly interested in how the provision of family planning, sex education, and abortion services affects health, educational attainment, employment, and empowerment of women and their families.

There are two main reasons why I care about topics in reproductive health. First, as a woman, I know how important it is to have access to information and services that would allow me to make informed decisions regarding sexual behaviors, pregnancy, and childbearing. Decisions on reproductive health may not only affect the health status of the people; they can have long-lasting effects on their lives, but also intergenerational effects. Second, as an international student, I have observed and experienced the differences in health care systems between a developed and a developing country. There is no doubt about the quality of services differs in both countries. Nonetheless, there is almost no gap between countries when comparing the misinformation, and lack of resources people could face when requesting reproductive health care, particularly low-income people.

My initial interest in reproductive health was triggered two years ago when reading about the 10th anniversary of the legalization of abortion in Mexico City. Two things captured my attention. The first one is that abortion is still illegal in the rest of the country. The second one is the lack of formal empirical research about this policy, where most of the information about it is anecdotal, and few studies are based on data. Therefore, there is almost no economic research on the effect of this program. The evidence from formal studies could support (or prevent if it is the case) the legalization of abortion in the rest of the country, which would provide more women with the benefits of accessing legal abortion.

My interest in the legalization of abortion in Mexico has translated into two ongoing projects. In one of these projects, my coauthors[1] and I exploit the exogenous variation that the legalization of abortion in Mexico City provides, to investigate the causal relationship between abortion rights and female empowerment, particularly sexual violence, educational attainment, and labor outcomes. The second project, which is my potential JMP, studies the effects of the expansion of access to abortion and the introduction to Plan B on contraception use. Since traditional contraception, abortion, and emergency contraception share a similar goal, which is preventing unintended pregnancy, they may be substitutes to some degree. Then, it is theoretically possible that expanding access to abortion and plan B would reduce contraception use. Such substitution could expose

[1] My coauthors of this project are Sofia Amaral at the University of Munich and Aixa Garcia-Ramos at the University of Passau.

women to higher risks associated with unprotected intercourse and unintended pregnancy and, on a broader scale, affect social norms.

Regarding the U.S., I am also working on three projects that evaluate policies related to contraception and abortion. The implications that access to contraception had for women in the U.S. in the 70s and 80s have been widely documented. Previous studies associated the expansion of legal access to oral contraception with delays in the age of first marriage and first birth, and with improvements in educational and labor outcomes. However, little is known about the long-term effects of contraception. My coauthors[2] and I extend the current literature by providing the first evidence on how early access to the Pill affects women's long-run health outcomes and the first to document effects on education and economic outcomes using information from the Health and Retirement Survey (HRS).

The abortion landscape in the U.S. has become more restrictive in the last few years. Since 2011, most of the states have passed different laws that limit the demand and provision of this procedure. Restricting abortion could have effects on childbearing, but also human capital decisions. In one project, my advisor and I examined the effects of a 2015 Tennessee law that requires women to wait 48 hours after counseling before obtaining an abortion. Using a difference-in-differences approach, we find that the introduction of a mandatory waiting period in Tennessee caused a 62 percent increase in the share of abortions obtained during the second trimester, completely closing the pre-existing gap between Tennessee and the comparison states. Nonetheless, the evidence of an effect of the law on abortion rates is not conclusive. A version of this article is available as an NBER working paper.[3]

In another project, Kelly Jones[4] and I analyze the economic effects of targeted regulations on abortion providers (TRAP) laws. The existing literature has focused on TRAP laws in Texas, and they have found significant decreases in abortion rates. However, to our knowledge, there are no other studies of TRAP laws in other states, and no study focuses on economic outcomes. In this project, we analyze the effects of TRAP laws across states on unintended pregnancy, educational attainment, and employment.

I aspire to become a health economist who develops formal studies of the effects that health policies have on women and their families. I want to contribute to the public debate with straight facts about the benefits and consequences of policies. Although I have already been exposed to research, the Boot Camp could be an excellent opportunity to expand my knowledge in other areas of the field such that I could develop new research interests and new collaborations.

[2] My coauthors of this project are Jason Lindo, David Pritchard, and Hedieh Tajali from Texas A&M University.
[3] https://www.nber.org/papers/w26228.pdf
[4] Kelly Jones is a Research Assistant Professor of Economics at American University.

Jason M. Lindo
Professor of Economics
Texas A&M University

October 10, 2019

Dear NBER Health Economics Boot Camp Selection Committee,

It is my pleasure to write in support of Mayra Pineda Torres for this opportunity. Mayra is an extremely promising scholar working on reproductive health care—a topic that is under-represented in health economics research in my opinion—who brings a unique perspective and is posed to do very important work for both the US and Mexican contexts.

I believe Mayra is a fantastic candidate for this boot camp. Mayra is a fourth-year PhD student working under my supervision and her research is squarely in the area of health economics with a focus on reproductive health care. I anticipate that she will continue with this research agenda for years to come, though she has diverse research interests like many applied microeconomists. She has one completed study providing new evidence on the effects of mandatory waiting periods for abortion in the United States (NBER Working Paper No. 26228, under review); work-in-progress evaluating the *very*-long-run effects of early legal access to birth control pills and abortion in the United States on health outcomes and economic security in retirement, which will be presented at the AEA Meetings in January; and an extensive research agenda on the effects of abortion access and contraception access in Mexico.

Mayra's work in the Mexican context is particularly exciting. The foundation for this work is an amazing city-by-quarter data set on the sales of drugs, including both a wide variety of contraceptives (pills, implants, IUDs, injectables, emergency contraception) and medication that is typically used to self-induce abortions. As a start, I believe that this work will shed light on use of these medications in a way that has never been done before for the Mexican context. Beyond that, she can use these data to evaluate the effects of legalizing abortion in Mexico City and also the effects of the introduction of new contraceptives to the market.

I'd like to mention two other things that I think may be important as you evaluate Mayra's application. First, I believe that Mayra will benefit a great deal from being exposed to the variety of approaches and areas of specialization reflected in the diverse set of folks who will be presenting and attending at the Boot Camp. (Here at Texas A&M I am the only faculty member in the economics department who would consider himself a health economist.) Second, Mayra is very ambitious and is a great citizen in the profession. She has been an active participant at a large number of conferences (more so than any student I've had before), including the Graduate Student Summit for Diversity in Economics at UC Berkeley and the American Society of Hispanic Economics Annual Meetings (3 times).

Texas A&M University, College Station, TX, 77843
T 979 446 3969 · http://people.tamu.edu/~jlindo/ · jlindo@tamu.edu

Overall, Mayra is an excellent student with an exciting research agenda that is likely to influence important policies in the United States and in Mexico. At this stage, she is as promising as any student I have advised before, including students who ultimately landed tenure-track positions at Vanderbilt, Montana State, and Tennessee. She has my highest recommendation. Please don't hesitate to ask if there's anything else I can tell you about her.

Sincerely,



Jason Lindo
Professor of Economics
Texas A&M University