To
National Bureau of Economic Research

Dear Admission Committee,

I am writing to express my interest in the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) Mentoring Program for students in aging and health economics. As a doctoral candidate at the University of Kentucky, my research focuses on health economics and policy. I firmly believe that the NBER Mentoring Program presents an incredible opportunity to advance my research and make meaningful contributions to the field under the guidance of NBER affiliates.

My academic and personal journey has been profoundly shaped by my experiences as an Iranian scholar. After completing my Bachelor's and Master's degrees in my home country, I witnessed firsthand the challenges and hardships encountered by those in vulnerable positions. These experiences have not only shaped my worldview but have also ignited a strong passion for utilizing economic research as a tool for creating a more equitable world. This commitment to social justice, combined with my deep interest in health economics, led me to pursue a Ph.D. at the Martin School of Public Policy and Administration. Under the mentorship of Dr. Caroline Weber, my current research delves into the impact of policy changes on substance use and its consequent health effects across various age demographics.

The NBER Mentoring Program perfectly complements my current research interests and my aspirations to influence public health policy on a global scale. I am particularly excited about the prospect of engaging in discussions on empirical methods and exploring relevant data sets, which I believe will be invaluable in refining my dissertation and future research projects. Moreover, the opportunity to interact with senior scholars and peers is crucial for my professional development and networking within the field.

My academic journey has been driven by a relentless pursuit of knowledge, even in the face of adversity. This unique perspective has instilled in me a deep desire to leverage my research to uplift those who are disadvantaged. Beyond academia, my ultimate goal is to contribute to developing economic policies that promote equitable opportunities for every individual, regardless of their background. I firmly believe that the dynamic and collaborative atmosphere nurtured by the NBER mentoring program will sharpen my research abilities and provide me with the tools necessary to make substantial strides in my mission to promote social equity through my work in economics.

Thank you for considering my application. I look forward to the possibility of participating in this transformative experience.

Warm regards,

Fatemeh Lashkaripour
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Education

University of Kentucky, Lexington, USA 2022–Present
PhD in Public Policy
Advisor: Caroline Weber, Associate Professor
Ferdowsi University, Mashhad, Iran 2012–2016
MSc in Economics
Ferdowsi University, Mashhad, Iran 2008–2012
BSc in Economics

Research Interests

Health Economics, Public Health, Environmental Policy, Public Economics

Working Papers

- The Evolution of Cannabis Consumption: Evidence from Traffic Fatalities (with Caroline Weber)

Conferences

- The Differential Pass-Throughs of Exchange Rate into Land, Consumer, and Import Price Indices, 2016
- The Role of Female Entrepreneurship in Economic Growth, 2015

Professional Experiences

- Research Assistant, University of Kentucky, 2022–Present
- Researcher, Institute of Urban Studies, 2016–2018
- Teaching Assistant, 2017 and 2015

Skills

Stata, R, Matlab

Languages

English, Farsi

Honors and Awards

- Travel grant ($1500), 2023

- Travel grant ($1500), 2022
- Ph.D. student fellowship ($8500), 2022
- Distinguished Student Award (ranked 2nd out of 50 students), 2014

Completed PhD Courses

- Math Camp
- Economics of Policy Analysis (Spring 2022)
- Fiscal/Budgetary Policy (Spring 2022)
- Public Organization and Administration (Spring 2022)
- Tax Policy (Fall 2022)
- Special Topics in Public Policy (Fall 2022)
- Econometrics for Policy Analysis (Fall 2022)
- Price Theory and Applications (Fall 2022)
- Environmental Economics (Spring 2023)
- Labor Economics II (Spring 2023)
- Intro to Econometrics I (Spring 2023)
- Intro to Econometrics II (Fall 2023)
- Public Policy Formation and Implementation (Fall 2023)

Dear Admission Committee,

My interest in health economics and policy analysis has been shaped by my experience as a Research Assistant for Dr. Caroline Weber at the Martin School for Public Policy & Administration. In May 2023, I began working on a project titled "The Evolution of Cannabis Consumption," which delves into the intricate dynamics of cannabis use following the legalization of recreational cannabis across the United States.

Our study explores the nuanced impacts of legalizing recreational cannabis on overall consumption trends, considering potential movement away from illicit markets and medical marijuana. We aim to introduce a novel annual measure that estimates the fraction of adults using cannabis by analyzing THC levels in traffic fatalities. This approach circumvents the drawbacks of relying on self-reported survey data, painting a more precise picture of cannabis use patterns and how they shift in response to legislative changes. Moreover, our research examines consumption trends across different population segments and high-risk behaviors, shedding new light on the wider ramifications of cannabis legalization. This research not only deepens our understanding of cannabis use and its consequences but also establishes a new standard for accurately measuring substance use.

My motivation for participating in the NBER mentoring program is twofold. First, I am eager to refine my research skills by immersing myself in the latest empirical methods and data analytics techniques. The NBER mentoring program provides an exceptional platform for achieving this objective, allowing me to enhance the rigor and impact of my contributions to the field.

Secondly, this program offers a rare opportunity to discuss my research with leading experts and talented peers, potentially laying the groundwork for future collaborations. I am particularly fascinated by how the mentoring program's focus on aging, health economics, and demography could foster peer engagements that deepen my understanding of the wider societal effects of cannabis legalization, especially across different age demographics.

Thank you for considering my application. I am thrilled at the prospect of joining the NBER mentoring program and the potential milestones it represents in my academic and professional journey. I am confident that this experience will be instrumental in shaping my future endeavors and allowing me to make meaningful contributions to the field.

Warm regards,

Fatemeh Lashkaripour