Melody Afrane Pinamang

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Research Profile

PhD student in Health Services Research specializing in maternal health and health system performance. My work examines how health system structure, access barriers, and care coordination influence maternal and postpartum outcomes using large administrative and survey data.

Research Interests

Maternal health policy; health care access and disparities; health system structure and performance; care coordination; postpartum mental health; digital health and information access in maternal care

Education

University of Maryland, College Park
PhD in Health Services Research — Aug 2023-present (Expected 2028)
University of Maryland, Baltimore County - **UMBC**
Master of Public Policy (Health Policy Concentration) — May 2023
Mississippi State University
Master of Science in Applied Economics — August 2020
University of Cape Coast, Ghana
Bachelor of Arts in Economics — August 2017

Conference Presentations

- *Understanding Variations in Postpartum Mental Health Care Need, Access, and Barriers.* Poster presentation, Annual Research Meeting, Seattle, WA, 2026.
- *A causal analysis of conservation practices on corn yield: evidence from the Mississippi Delta and Arkansas Delta*. Podium Presentation, Southern Economics Association (SEA), 2020, Louisville, Kentucky

Research Experience

Research Assistant – Department of Health Policy and Management
University of Maryland, College Park | *June 2024 – Present*

- Construct state-year datasets from TEDS to analyze treatment utilization patterns across states and over time
- Clean, manage, and prepare large national datasets (PRAMS, NVSS) for maternal health research
- Prepare analytic datasets for projects examining postpartum mental health care access and abortion policy impacts
- Develop reproducible Stata workflows for data cleaning, variable construction, and descriptive analysis
- Contribute to manuscript development, including literature review and drafting sections
  Supervisor: Dr. Rebecca Gourevitch

Research Assistant – School of Public Policy
University of Maryland, Baltimore County | *Aug 2021 – June 2023*

- Reviewed literature, proofread, and provided feedback on a meta-analysis article evaluating COVID-19 vaccine lotteries
- Supported research projects on tuberculosis and long COVID
- Conducted exploratory analysis using multi-year Demographic Health Surveys on facility-based vs. home births in low- and middle-income countries
  Supervisor: Dr. Zoë M. McLaren

Research Assistant – Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics
Mississippi State University, Starkville, MS | *Aug 2018 – Aug 2020*

- Performed economic analysis of on-farm water conservation, crop yield, and farm payment policies
- Conducted quantitative research, analyzed data, and proposed policy recommendations
- Assisted in literature reviews for multiple projects
  Supervisor: Dr. Seong D. Yun

Junior Research Analyst – Research and Evaluation Unit
Ghana Revenue Authority, Accra, Ghana | *Aug 2017 – Feb 2018*

- Designed and administered face-to-face surveys to over 100 rural residents
- Represented the department at five seminars and prepared summary briefings
- Cleaned and prepared quantitative data for analysis
- Contributed to the development of internal research reports and presentations

Research in Progress

- Gourevitch, R., Pinamang, M. A., & Thoma, M. (2026). *Self-reported need, use, and barriers to postpartum mental health treatment.* Under review.
- Pinamang, M. A. (Manuscript in preparation) *Persistent cigarette and e-cigarette use during pregnancy: The role of social determinants of health.*
- Pinamang, M. A. (Dissertation in progress). *Hospital Obstetric Unit Closures and Maternal Health Outcomes in the United States.*

Technical Skills

- **Statistical Software:** Stata, R, SAS
- **Methods:** Survey-weighted analysis; causal inference methods (DiD, event study)
- **Data:** Large administrative datasets (HCUP SID, AHA, TEDS); survey data (PRAMS, NVSS, DHS)
- **Reproducibility:** Automated workflows, Excel output (putexcel), data cleaning pipelines

Teaching Experience

Teaching Assistant, University of Maryland, College Park
Led discussion sections, graded assignments, held office hours, and supported instruction in undergraduate and graduate-level courses.

- HLSA 760: Healthcare Financial Management (Spring 2025, 2026)

- HLSA 742: Quantitative Methods (Fall 2024, 2025)
- HLSA 730: Healthcare Human Resources (Summer 2025)
- HLSA 300: Introduction to Health Policy and Services (Spring 2024)

Teaching Assistant, University of Maryland Baltimore County
Assisted with grading, office hours, and student support for policy and research methods courses.

- PUBL 602: Microeconomics for Public Policy (Fall 2022, Spring 2023)
- PUBL 600: Research Methodology (Spring 2022)
- PUBL 607: Statistical Applications in Evaluation Research (Spring 2023)

Teaching Assistant, University of Cape Coast
Led weekly tutorials and discussion sections, graded exams, proctored tests, and supported instruction in undergraduate economics courses.

- ECO 452: Health Economics (Spring 2017)
- ECO 408: Public Sector Economics (Spring 2017)
- ECO 306: Economics of HIV/AIDS (Fall 2016)
- ECO 101: Principles of Microeconomics (Fall 2016)

Awards and Honors

- Kaiser Permanente Graduate Endowment Scholarship, School of Public Health, University of Maryland, College Park, (March 2026)
- Equity and Inclusion Student Fellowship, APPAM (*Fall 2024*)
- Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society, University of Maryland, College Park (*Spring 2024*)
- Adam Yarmolinsky Fellowship, School of Public Policy, UMBC (*Spring 2022*)
- Best Female Economics Teaching Assistant, Department of Economics, UCC (*Spring 2017*)
- Dean's Award Recipient, Faculty of Social Sciences, UCC (Spring 2016)

Service and Leadership

- **Session Chair**, Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM) Annual Fall Research Conference, National Harbor, MD (2024)
- **Discussant**, Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM) Annual Fall Research Conference, Washington, DC (2022)
- **Session Chair**, McNair Research Conference (2022)
- **Tutor**, Math Learning Center, Agile Online Learning Solutions (2019-2025)

Professional Affiliations

- American Society of Health Economists (ASHEcon) — 2025- Present
- AcademyHealth — 2023 -Present
- Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM) — 2021-Present
- Southern Economics Association (2018 – 2021)

Research Interests and Motivation for the NBER Health Economics Mentoring Program

During my time in Mississippi, where I completed my master's training in applied economics, I became increasingly aware of how geography and local health care capacity shape access to care. In some communities, patients traveled long distances to neighboring counties to seek services unavailable locally because of provider shortages or limited health care resources. Observing these patterns sparked my interest in the kinds of questions health economists ask about provider supply, geographic variation in access, and the broader consequences of health care resource allocation.

I am now a doctoral student in Health Services Research at the University of Maryland, where my research focuses on how structural changes in health care systems influence access to care, disparities, and patient outcomes. My current work examines disparities in postpartum mental health care need, access, and barriers using national survey data, with a focus on how financial, organizational, and informational barriers differentially affect underserved populations. This work has deepened my interest in understanding the determinants of health disparities and how health system design shapes access to care.

My dissertation extends these questions to maternal health system capacity. I examine how hospital obstetric unit closures affect severe maternal morbidity, postpartum readmissions, and delivery patterns, with particular interest in understanding closures as localized shocks to provider supply. I am also interested in how these changes disrupt care coordination and generate spillover effects across neighboring hospitals. More broadly, I am interested in health economics questions related to provider availability, health care resource allocation, access disparities, and policy-relevant structural changes in health care delivery.

I am interested in the NBER Mentoring Program because I would benefit from mentorship on how to more rigorously frame my research within the health economics literature and strengthen the empirical design of my work. I would also value guidance on commonly used data sources, publication strategy, and building a coherent long-term research agenda in health economics. As someone trained across economics, public policy, and health services research, I see this program as an important opportunity to sharpen my thinking and better position myself for an academic research career.

I also believe I would contribute a valuable perspective to the mentoring cohort by bringing an interdisciplinary lens grounded in health systems research and policy evaluation. My work focuses on questions of access, equity, and care delivery that intersect closely with broader health economics concerns around resource allocation and health system performance.