

Affordable Care Act Memo Prompt
Research Methods
PA 515
Coupet

You are the head researcher for the North Carolina Division of Public Health. The state is considering Medicaid expansion, but are reticent to do so because of lingering misunderstandings about the effects of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Some lawmakers are particularly worried about insurance access, and concerned that the ACA did not have the intended effects on insurance coverage. Sentiment about the ACA has been politically charged, but lawmakers know very little about the empirical results of the program.

Lawmakers have turned to the Division of Public Health and want to know the effects the ACA had on access to insurance. To Division Chief, who has not taken PA 515 at NC State taught by the awesome Dr. Coupet, turns to you to summarize the findings. **As head researcher, you are tasked with reporting the effects of the ACA on access to health insurance to the state's lawmakers.**

As head researcher, you know that all policy claims should be evidence based. As a remedy, **draft a two page (MAXIMUM)** memo evaluating the available evidence on the effects of the ACA on health insurance access, and the role of Medicaid expansion. To do so, you must use two important tools. **First**, read "The Affordable Care Act's Effects on Patients, Providers, and the Economy: What We've Learned So Far" published in the *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*. You must read the entire article, but focus on Pages 1031-1035, paying special attention to Table 1. **Second**, listen to the JPAM *Closer Look* Podcast, Episode 2. This can be found here: <http://www.appam.org/publications/jpam/jpam-podcast/>, as well as on Apple Podcasts.

You are allowed (and encouraged) to use *Google Scholar* (or other relevant databases) to dig deeper on the findings produced in Table 1. Use this evidence in your memo, and summarize the findings in a way digestible to impressionable, whimsical, and largely uneducated lawmakers. Your memo **cannot exceed two pages in text. Memos exceeding two pages (single spaced) will receive zero points because anything over this is unlikely to be read by legislators.** A reference page should be included and appended to the two-page memo. **You can work solo or in teams of no more than two. Both partners should sign the memo.**

As far as a rubric, I will be intentionally open minded as I want you to leave you room to be creatively concise. I can imagine that a good paper would begin with a paragraph summarizing the recommendations in the memo (an executive summary of sorts), then evaluate each recommendation above in perhaps a paragraph or two each (including well-summarized, accurate evidence from specific studies), then a strong conclusion pushing forth a definitive recommendation on the proposed policies. The reference list should be in APA format. I encourage you think be creative about your approach but concise, clear and rigorous in your evaluation. Again, you cannot exceed two pages (with a third reference page). If you can do it in less, great! But be sure you included enough to make it convincing.

Please email questions to me at jacoupet@ncsu.edu, although I do encourage you to try to lean on your instincts for this. Its good practice!