

Contact Information

University of Pittsburgh School of Public Health
130 De Soto St, Pittsburgh, PA 15261
Office Number A664
(304) 416-1342

J. Travis Donahoe

<https://www.travisdonahoe.com/>
tdonahoe@pitt.edu

Academic Positions:

Assistant Professor, Department of Health Policy & Management, University of Pittsburgh School of Public Health, 2023 – present

Education:

Ph.D., Health Policy (Economics track), Harvard University, 2023
M.P.H., Health Management & Policy, University of Michigan, 2018
B.B.A., Management, & B.S., Public Health, Marshall University, *summa cum laude*, 2016

Grants and Awards:

2023	American Society of Health Economists, Student Paper Award
2022-2023	National Institutes of Health/AHRQ, R36 Dissertation Award, Project Title “Drug Markets and the Opioid Epidemic”
2021-2023	National Bureau of Economics Research, Predoctoral Fellow in the Economics of Aging

Research Papers In Progress:

“Supplier Enforcement and the Opioid Crisis”

This paper studies the effects of shutting down prescribers, dispensers, and distributors that inappropriately handle prescription opioids on local opioid supply and mortality. With competitive supply, theory suggests the effects of closing any single supplier will be offset by substitution. Closing a supplier may have an effect on overall supply, however, if the targeted supplier is more lax with prescriptions than others or if the action has general deterrence effects. To examine enforcement empirically, I exploit differential timing of initial enforcement actions across areas following a federal expansion of enforcement in 2008. I show enforcement reduced overall opioid shipments by 20 percent in the average affected county for three years. Results further show that enforcement actions targeting distributors primarily reduced opioid shipments to pharmacies and clinics with suspicious order patterns. Overall, these findings demonstrate a large role for supplier enforcement to reduce harmful prescription opioid supply. Enforcement actions had heterogeneous effects on mortality. In Florida, which experienced the most enforcement, overdose death rates fell by 22 percent due to enforcement actions for five years. Outside of Florida, where enforcement was less intensive, overall mortality was unaffected. This heterogeneity is an important policy issue.

“Why Has the Opioid Epidemic Lasted So Long?” (with David Cutler)

This paper examines the question of why opioid overdose death rates in the U.S. have been rising for over thirty years, when many drug epidemics have been shorter. We develop a model of addictive drug deaths that allows for “thick market externalities”—when an exogenous increase in drug use has feedback effects that induce even more people to use drugs. We identify several reasons for thick market externalities, such as information about drugs flowing more readily when more people use them, drug users serving as suppliers themselves, and the costs of using drugs (prices and expected penalties) falling with greater use. Our empirical analysis demonstrates the importance of thick market externalities using data on overdose death rates linked to peer connectedness, measured by Facebook friendships, and physical distance between counties. We find that rising death rates in friend and neighboring counties are strongly correlated with rising death rates in one’s own county. Results show thick market externalities are a main factor that explains why the epidemic has gone on for so long.

Publications:

Travis Donahoe and Thomas McGuire. 2020. “The Vexing Relationship Between Socioeconomic Status and Health.” *Israel Journal of Health Policy Research* 9 no. 1: article 68.

Contact Information

University of Pittsburgh School of Public Health
130 De Soto St, Pittsburgh, PA 15261
Office Number A664
(304) 416-1342

J. Travis Donahoe

<https://www.travisdonahoe.com/>
tdonahoe@pitt.edu

Nancy Fleischer, Travis Donahoe, Chandler McCloud, James Thrasher, David Levy, Michael Elliot, Rafael Meza, and Megan Patrick. 2021. "Taxation reduces smoking but may not reduce smoking disparities in youth." *Tobacco Control* 30 no. 3: 264-272.

William Dow, Edward Norton, and Travis Donahoe. 2019. "Stata Tip 134: Multiplicative AND Marginal Effects in Nonlinear Models." *The Stata Journal* 19 no. 4: 1015-1020.

Travis Donahoe, Edward Norton, Michael Elliot, Andrea Titus, Luci Kalousová, and Nancy Fleischer. 2019. "The Affordable Care Act Medicaid Expansion and Smoking Cessation Among Low-Income Smokers." *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* 57 no. 6: e203-e210.

Alana Sharp, Travis Donahoe, Amanda Milliken, Jacqueline Barocio, Salome Charalambous, and Zoë McLaren. 2018. "Do Incarcerated Populations Serve as a Reservoir for Tuberculosis in South Africa?" *The American Journal of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene* 99 no. 6: 1390-1396.

Travis Donahoe, Andrea Titus, and Nancy Fleischer. 2018. "Key factors inhibiting legislative progress towards smoke-free coverage in Appalachia." *American Journal of Public Health* 108 no. 3: 372-378.

Conference Presentations:

2023	American Society of Health Economists, Annual Meeting
2023	Allied Social Science Associate, Annual Meeting
2022	National Institutes of Health/AHRQ Trainee Research Conference
2021	American Society of Health Economists, Annual Meeting
2021	National Institutes of Health/AHRQ, Trainee Research Conference

Other Employment:

2020-2023	Greylock McKinnon Associates, Consultant
-----------	--