

Kacie L Dragan, PhD, MPH

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SUMMARY

I am an Assistant Professor of Health Policy and Management at Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health. I use quantitative methods from across disciplines to evaluate the health impacts of social safety net policies, including in the Medicaid, housing, food security, and education sectors. I also tackle methodological questions in health services research, like outcome measurement in claims data and statistical issues in the evaluation of social programs. My work has been published in leading journals, including *Health Affairs*, *JAMA Health Forum*, *Journal of Health Economics*, *American Journal of Public Health*, and *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* and has been covered by *The New York Times*, public radio, and *Vox*.

ACADEMIC POSITIONS

Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health, Dept. of Health Policy and Management	New York, NY
Assistant Professor of Health Policy and Management	Aug 2025-present
Faculty Affiliate, Columbia Population Research Center	Aug 2025-present
Faculty Affiliate, Center for Public Health Systems	Aug 2025-present
The Dartmouth Institute for Health Policy and Clinical Practice, Dartmouth College	Lebanon, NH
Provost's Post-Doctoral Research Fellow (PROF Fellow)	Jun 2024-Aug 2025

EDUCATION

Harvard University	Cambridge, MA
Ph.D. in Health Policy (concentration in Methods for Policy Research)	May 2024
Radcliffe Institute Graduate Fellow, 2023-2024	
Dissertation: <i>Place, Policy, and Health: Essays on the Intersection of Health Policy and Social Policy</i>	
Committee: David Cutler (chair), Jessica Cohen, Sherry Glied, Tim Layton	
Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health	New York, NY
Master of Public Health	May 2016
Sociomedical Sciences Department (concentration in Public Health Research Methods)	
Barnard College of Columbia University	New York, NY
Bachelor of Arts with Honors, Sociology Human Rights	May 2014
Phi Beta Kappa, <i>summa cum laude</i>	

RESEARCH INTERESTS AND EXPERTISE

Safety net policies; Medicaid; health economics; quasi-experimental methods; social epidemiology; administrative data; child health; urban health; social determinants of health; housing policy; "Health in All Policies"

PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

Published or in press:

1. **Dragan KL.** (2026) The Impact of Health Shocks on Housing Instability: Evidence from Urban Medicaid Enrollees. *Journal of Health Economics*. 108(2026): 103150.
2. Hong K, **Dragan KL**, and Glied SA. (2026) Kids Give You Headaches? Universal Prekindergarten and Maternal Prescriptions for Pain-Relief and Hormone Medications. *Health Economics*. ePub ahead of print.

3. **Dragan KL.** (2026) Housing Quality Improvement and Health Care Utilization: A Regression Discontinuity Study. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*. 45(1): e70074.
4. Sanchez CM, Crook S, Jiang P, **Dragan KL**, Woo JL, Newburger JW, Jacobs ML, Goldstone AB, Nash K, Vincent R, Walsh-Spoonhower K, Mosca R, Kumar S, Devejian N, Biddix B, Alferis GM, Swartz MF, Meyer D, Billings J, and Anderson BR. (2026) Congenital Heart Diseases Involving Congenitally Diseased Pulmonary Valve Phenotypes: Novel Insights into the Healthcare Burden across the Lifecourse. *Journal of Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery Open*. ePub ahead of print.
5. Woo JL, **Dragan KL**, Crook S, Yee LM, Grobman WA, et al. (2025) Linkage of Parent-Infant Health Care Claims Reveals Prenatal Care Gaps. *Journal of the American College of Cardiology: Advances*. 4(7): 101871.
6. Newton L, **Dragan KL**, Cusimano LD, and Loehrer AP. (2025) Association of State and Local Social and Public Health Spending with Cancer Incidence and Mortality. *Cancer Control*. 32(Sept): 1-11.
7. Crook S, Sanchez CM, **Dragan K**, Woo JL, Jiang P, Neidell M, et al. (2025) Days Alive Out of Health Care: A Novel Measure of Health Status After Congenital Heart Surgery. *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*. 85(8): 851-862.
8. **Dragan KL** and Glied SA. (2024). Major Traffic Safety Reform and Road Traffic Injuries among Low-Income New York Residents, 2009-2021. *American Journal of Public Health*. 114(6): 663-641.
 - Covered in [The New York Times](#), the [NYT's Upshot](#), and [Streetsblog](#); recorded interviews for WNYC Morning Edition and ABC15 Phoenix
 - Awarded *Honorable Mention* by NYC's Vision Zero Task Force for best traffic policy research 2014-2024
9. Chakraborty O, **Dragan KL**, Ellen IG, Glied S, Howland RE, Wang SS, and Neill D. (2024). Identifying Housing-Sensitive Health Conditions Using Machine Learning. *Health Affairs*. 43(2):297-304.
 - Covered in [WNYC \(Gothamist\)](#)
10. Crook S, **Dragan K**, Woo JL, Neidell M, Nash KA, et al. (2024) Impact of Social Determinants of Health on Predictive Models for Outcomes after Congenital Heart Surgery. *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*. 83(24):2440-2454.
11. McGaughey P, Howland RE, and **Dragan KL**. (2024) Variation in Preterm Birth Rates Across Prenatal Care Sites in New York. *Journal of Obstetric, Gynecologic, & Neonatal Nursing*. 53(1):46-56.
12. Crook S, **Dragan K**, Woo JL, Neidell M, et al. (2023) Long-Term Health Care Utilization After Cardiac Surgery in Children Covered Under Medicaid. *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*. 81(16):1605-1617.
13. Woo JL, Nash KA, **Dragan KL**, Crook S, Neidell M, et al. (2023) Chronic Medication Burden for Pediatric Medicaid Beneficiaries after Cardiac Surgery. *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*. 82(13):1331-1340
14. **Dragan KL**, Desai SM, Billings J, and Glied SA. (2022) Association of Insurance Mix and Diagnostic Coding Practices in New York State Hospitals. *JAMA Health Forum*. 2;3(9):e222919.
 - Covered in [Medscape](#)
15. Allen P, Zafar F, Mi J, Crook S, Woo J, Jayaram N, Bryant R, Karamlou T, Tweddell J, **Dragan K**, Cook S, Hannan EL, Newburger JW, Bacha EA, Vincent R, Nguyen K, Walsh-Spoonhower K, Mosca R, Devejian N, Kamenir SA, Alfieri GM, Swartz MF, Meyer D, Paul EA, Billings J, and Anderson BR. (20223) Risk Stratification for Congenital Heart Surgery for ICD-10 Administrative Data (RACHS-2). *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*. 79(5):465-478.
16. Anderson BA, **Dragan K**, Crook S, Woo JL, Cook S, Hannan EL, et al. (2021) Improving Longitudinal Outcomes, Efficiency, and Equity in the Care of Patients With Congenital Heart Disease. *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*. 78(17):1703-1713.
17. Ellen IG, **Dragan KL**, and Glied SA. (2020) Renovating Subsidized Housing: The Impact on Tenants' Health. *Health Affairs*. 39(2):224-232.
18. **Dragan KL**, Ellen IG, and Glied S. (2020) Does gentrification displace poor children and their families? New Evidence from Medicaid Data in New York City. *Regional Science and Urban Economics*. 83:103481.
 - Covered in [New York Magazine](#), [Bloomberg News \(CityLab\)](#), and [VoxEU](#)

19. Kang JX, Levanon Seligson A, and **Dragan KL**. (2020) Identifying neighborhoods at risk of being overlooked for interventions in New York City: A practical approach. *Preventing Chronic Disease*. 17(E32):1-6.
20. **Dragan KL**, Ellen IG, and Glied SA. (2019) Gentrification and The Health of Low-Income Children in New York City. *Health Affairs*. 38(9):1425-1432.
 - Covered in [Bloomberg News \(CityLab\)](#) and [VoxEU](#)
21. Hong K, **Dragan K** and Glied S. (2019) Seeing and Hearing: The Impacts of New York City’s Universal Prekindergarten Program on the Health of Low-Income Children. *Journal of Health Economics*. 64:93-107.
 - Covered in [Business Insider](#), [Vox](#), [ChalkBeat](#), and [Public Health Post](#)

RESEARCH GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS

Center for Environmental Health in Northern Manhattan (\$13,500)	2026-2027
P30 Pilot Grant Program (P30ES009089) at Columbia, The National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences	
Role: PI	
Project title: Evaluating the Health and Health Care Utilization Impacts of NYC’s Heavy Heating Oil Phaseout using Linked Administrative Data	
American Heart Association (Food is Medicine) (\$106,000)	2025-2026
Role: PI	
Project title: Smarter Targeting of “Food is Medicine” Interventions	
New York Health Foundation (\$178,469)	2025-2026
Role: Co-PI	
Project title: The Relationship between Primary Care Spending and Medicaid Outcomes and Expenditures	
Harvard Radcliffe Institute Fellowship (\$39,270)	2023-2024
Role: Fellow	
Description: One of three Harvard doctoral candidates selected from across all schools and programs; awarded one year of funding to complete research among the interdisciplinary Radcliffe Institute community	
Horowitz Foundation for Social Policy Research Grant (\$9,000)	2023
Role: PI	
Description: Internationally competitive research grant to “support emerging scholars and encourage projects that address contemporary issues in the social sciences”; Was additionally awarded the Eli Ginzberg Award for the “most outstanding policy-related project in health and welfare, particularly in urban settings”	
Fellowship in Health Policy and Insurance Research, Point 32 Health (\$40,620)	2022-2023
Role: Fellow	
Description: Awarded to one doctoral student to conduct an independently-led project in the area of health insurance	
Graduate Society Summer Predissertation Fellowship, Harvard University (\$3,000)	2021
Role: PI	
Description: Awarded to “outstanding Harvard GSAS doctoral students in the humanities and social sciences” for the purpose of summer preliminary dissertation research	
Athena Summer Leadership Fellow, Barnard College (\$4,000 + housing)	2013
Role: Fellow	
Description: Summer stipend and housing awarded to ten students to complete NYC public service internships	

HONORS AND AWARDS

Early Career Scholarship Grant, Columbia University Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty Advancement (\$5000)	2026
Vision Zero Research Award - Honorable Mention, NYC Vision Zero Task Force	2024
Awarded <i>Honorable Mention</i> among papers published 2014-2024 that “advance understanding of road safety challenges	

or help evaluate road safety interventions”; Received an NYC Mayoral Citation for contribution to NYC policy

- Joan P. Curhan Citizenship Award, Harvard University (\$500) 2024
Awarded to a PhD student in Health Policy who has “contributed in a significant way to the collegiality and team spirit among students and faculty in the program”
- Certificate of Distinction in Teaching, Harvard University 2021; 2022
Awarded to instructors who have received a score of 4.5 or higher (out of 5) in course evaluations
- Distinguished Master’s Thesis, Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health 2016
Voted by faculty in the Sociomedical Sciences Department as the top Master’s Thesis of 2016
Title: “*Measuring quality & utility of NYC parks: a mixed methods approach using crowdsourced and public data*”
- Alpha Zeta Club Graduate Scholarship, Barnard College (\$1,500) 2014
Awarded to outstanding recent Barnard graduates who are candidates for higher degrees
- Phi Beta Kappa, Barnard College 2013
Elected in junior year (early inductee)

BOOK CHAPTERS, POLICY PUBLICATIONS, WHITE PAPERS, & COMMENTARIES

1. **Dragan, KL.** (2025). Gentrification and Health: Evidence from New York City, USA. In A Ribeiro, JP Silva, P Gullon, & T Astell-Burt (Eds.), *Routledge Geographies of Health: Gentrification and Public Health*. New York, NY: Routledge.
2. Herbert C, Scheckler S, Molinsky J, **Dragan K.** (2022). *Older Adult Out-of-Pocket Pharmaceutical Spending After Home Mortgage Payoff*. University of Wisconsin-Madison Center for Financial Security. Madison, WI.
3. Baquero M, Caramanica Zweig K, Meropol S, Vasan A, Delany-Brumsey A, Veras M, Chaitoo N, Vidal G, Demyan A, Davis C, Wang SS, **Dragan K**, Billings J. (2021). *Health Care Needs and Utilization Among New Yorkers With Criminal Justice System Involvement*. New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, New York City Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice, and NYU Wagner Graduate School of Public Service, New York, NY.
4. Sharp M, **Dragan K**, Billings J. (2018). *The Right Prescription: Assessing Potentially Inappropriate Use of Antibiotics Among New York’s Medicaid Population*. United Hospital Fund, New York, NY.
5. Allen J, **Dragan K**, Dubay L, Pruitt S, Scally C, Shafer MS. (2018). Promises and Pitfalls of Cross-Sector Research Collaboration. In A.L. Plough (Ed.), *Advancing Health and Well-Being: Using Evidence and Collaboration to Achieve Health Equity*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
6. Farley S, **Dragan K**, Hinterland K, Stalvey L. (2018). *Secondhand Smoke and Smoke-Free Housing in New York City*. NYC Vital Signs, 17(1); 1-4.
7. **Dragan, K.** (2018 Oct 31). *Perspectives on Cross-Sector Collaboration from Academia and Government*. Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Policies for Action Blog. <https://www.policiesforaction.org/blog/perspectives-cross-sector-collaboration-academia-and-government>
8. **Dragan, K.** (2018 Jul 18). *Partnerships Inspire Us to Ask the Next Big Question*. Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Policies for Action Blog. <https://www.policiesforaction.org/blog/partnerships-inspire-us-ask-next-big-question>
9. King L, Hinterland K, **Dragan KL**, Driver CR, Harris TG, Gwynn RC, Linos N, Barbot O, Bassett MT. (2015). *New York City Community Health Profiles 2015*; 13(1-59).
10. **Dragan KL**, King L, Hinterland K, Gwynn RC. (2015). *New York City Community Health Atlas 2015*; New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

INVITED LECTURES

1. “Neighborhoods and Child Mental Health Care Utilization in Medicaid,” March 26, 2026. Columbia University Families & Inequalities Seminar. New York, NY.
2. “When Worlds Collide: The Blurred Lines Between Health Care and Social Services,” January 23, 2026. Luminary Labs LLC. New York, NY.
3. “What is the Relationship Between Social Policy and Health Policy?” November 17, 2025. NYU’s undergraduate program in public policy, Topics in Health Policy: Policy, Politics, and Power. New York, NY.
4. “Neighborhoods and Child Mental Health: Evidence from National Medicaid Data” October 7, 2025. Boston University School of Public Health, Department of Epidemiology Seminar Series. Boston, MA.
5. “Research on Medicaid 1115 Demonstrations & SDOH Interventions” at *The Future of Medicaid Demonstrations: A Roundtable Discussion*. May 31, 2025. George Washington Law School. Washington, DC.
6. “The Intersection of Social Policy and Health Policy” February 20, 2025. Dartmouth College Economics Department, undergraduate course in Health Economics & Policy. Hanover, NH.
7. “What is the Relationship Between Social Policy and Health Policy?” November 25, 2024. NYU’s undergraduate program in public policy, Topics in Health Policy: Policy, Politics, and Power. New York, NY.
8. “How Do Neighborhoods Shape Pediatric Mental Health Utilization in Medicaid?” November 14, 2024. Weill-Cornell Medicine Department of Population Health Sciences’ Health Policy & Economics Work-In-Progress Seminar. New York, NY.
9. “The Intersection of Social Policy and Health Policy: Emerging Evidence,” April 15, 2024. NYU’s undergraduate program in public policy, Topics in Health Policy: Policy, Politics, and Power. New York, NY.
10. “Health Shocks and Housing Instability,” February 26, 2024. University of Pittsburgh. Pittsburgh, IL.
11. “Health Shocks and Housing Instability,” February 21, 2024. University of Illinois Chicago. Chicago, IL.
12. “Health Shocks and Housing Instability,” January 23, 2024. The Dartmouth Institute for Health Policy and Clinical Practice. Lebanon, NH.
13. “Health Shocks and Housing Instability,” January 17, 2024. University of Pennsylvania. Philadelphia, PA.
14. “Health Shocks and Housing Instability,” December 14, 2023. SUNY Downstate School of Public Health. New York, NY.
15. “Using Medicaid Data for Housing Research: Health Shocks and Housing Instability Among Urban Medicaid Enrollees,” September 18, 2023. University of Pittsburgh’s Health Policy Institute, Medicaid Research Center Seminar Series. Pittsburgh, PA.
16. “How Social Policies Shape Health: Methods, History, and Emerging Evidence,” April 17, 2023. NYU’s undergraduate program in public policy, Topics in Health Policy: Policy, Politics, and Power. New York, NY.
17. “Health in All Policies: The Health Impacts of Non-Health Policies,” April 18, 2022. NYU’s undergraduate program in public policy, Topics in Health Policy: Policy, Politics, and Power. New York, NY.
18. “Gentrification and Children’s Health,” November 7, 2019. Culture of Health: Housing and Health, Health Affairs Event. Washington, DC.
19. “How the Health Care System Is Organized,” June 6, 2019. NYU Wagner Master of Health Administration Program, Current Issues in Health Policy course. New York, NY.

20. “RWJF Healthy Communities Session on Public Housing Interventions,” April 16, 2019. Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s “Foundation Forum” series. Princeton, NJ.
21. “Large-scale Community Needs Assessments,” February 21, 2019. Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health Master of Public Health Program, Health Promotion: Theory, Research, and Practice course. New York, NY.
22. “Using Medicaid Data to Study the Effects of Public Policy,” November 11, 2018. Columbia University Medical Center, Pediatric Fellows Research Seminar. New York, NY.
23. “Using Big Data for Policy Research,” April 18, 2018. NYU Master of Public Administration Program, Current Issues in Health Policy course. New York, NY.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS (PEER-REVIEWED)

Oral presentations:

1. *How Do Neighborhoods Shape Child and Adolescent Mental Health Utilization? Evidence from within-State Movers in Medicaid.* American Society of Health Economists annual Conference; 2025 Jun 23. Nashville, TN.
2. *How Do Neighborhoods Shape Pediatric Mental Health Utilization? Evidence from within-State Movers in Medicaid.* Academy Health Annual Research Meeting; 2025 Jun 7. Minneapolis, MN.
3. *Health Shocks and Housing Instability among Urban Medicaid Enrollees.* Academy Health Annual Research Meeting; 2023 Jun 25. Seattle, WA.
4. *Universal Pre-K, Maternal Health, and Fertility.* Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management Research Conference; 2020 Nov 11. Virtual due to Covid-19.
5. *Insurance Mix and Coding Practices in New York State Hospitals.* Academy Health National Health Policy Conference; 2020 Feb 11; Washington, DC.
6. *Subsidized Housing Renovation and Health.* Interdisciplinary Association for Population Health Science Conference; 2018 Oct 4; Washington, DC.
7. *Big Data for Housing and Health: Leveraging Administrative Data to Produce Evidence for Upstream Policy Sectors.* Academy Health National Health Policy Conference; 2018 Feb 6; Washington, DC.
8. *Evidence from NYU’s Policies for Action Hub: Universal Pre-K & Neighborhood Economic Change.* Academy Health Annual Research Meeting; 2017 Jun 26; New Orleans, LA.
9. *Cross-Sector Collaboration in Research: Implications for Study Design and Approach.* RWJF Sharing Knowledge to Build a Culture of Health Conference; 2017 Feb 24; Louisville, KY.

Poster presentations:

1. *The Relationship between Plan Primary Care Investment and Enrollee Outcomes across Medicaid Managed Care.* Academy Health Annual Research Meeting; 2026 May 31.
2. *Housing Quality Improvement and Health Care Utilization: A Regression Discontinuity Study.* Academy Health Annual Research Meeting; 2025 Jun 7.
3. *Do High Administrative Costs Generate High Prices or Do High Prices Generate High Administrative Costs?: Insurance Mix and Coding Practices in New York State Hospitals.* Academy Health Annual Research Meeting; 2020 Jul 28.
4. *Gentrification and Children’s Wellbeing: Residential Mobility, Neighborhood Quality, and Health.* Academy Health Annual Research Meeting; 2018 Jun 24; Seattle, WA.
5. *Leveraging Neighborhood Data for Health Equity.* NYC Epidemiology Forum; 2016 Feb 26; New York, NY.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Analysis of Large-Scale Data, Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health Role: Instructor	<i>Fall 2025 - present</i>
Patients & Populations: Epidemiology and Biostatistics Unit, Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth Role: Instructor	<i>Fall 2024</i>
Why is There No Cure for Health? (GenEd 1079), Harvard University Role: Teaching Fellow (Faculty: Dr. David Cutler)	<i>Fall 2022</i>
Doctoral Core Course in Health Policy, Harvard University Role: Teaching Fellow (Faculty: Dr. Meredith Rosenthal)	<i>Fall 2021 & Spring 2022</i>
Economics of Health Care: Public vs. Market Resolutions, Harvard University Role: Teaching Fellow (Faculty: Dr. Tim Layton)	<i>Spring 2021</i>
Quantitative Data Analysis II, Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health Role: Teaching Fellow (Faculty: Dr. Debra Kalmuss and Dr. Samantha Garbers)	<i>Spring 2016</i>
Social Psychology and Personality Psychology labs, Barnard College Role: Teaching Assistant (Faculty: Dr. Joshua Davis)	<i>Spring 2012 & Fall 2012</i>
Head Writing Fellow, The Erica Mann Jong Writing Center, Barnard College Role: Fellow (Faculty: Dr. Pamela Cobrin)	<i>Fall 2011-Spring 2014</i>

LEADERSHIP & SERVICE

Journal Referee

American Economic Journal: Economic Policy, American Journal of Epidemiology, *American Journal of Public Health, BMC Public Health, Environmental Research, Health Affairs, Health & Place, Housing Policy Debate, Journal of Hospital Medicine, Journal of Housing and the Built Environment, Journal of Policy Analysis and Management, Journal of Urban Affairs, Medical Care, Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology, Social Science and Medicine, Social Science and Medicine - Population Health
*Top-rated reviewer recognition

Conference Abstract Reviewer

American Society of Health Economists (2025)
Academy Health (2026)

Conference Panel Chair

American Society of Health Economists (2025)
Academy Health (2026)

Leadership and advisory positions

Families & Inequality University Seminar, The University Seminars at Columbia University Co-Chair	New York, NY 2026-present
NYC “Research on the Road” Traffic Safety Research Symposium Award Selection and Research Priorities Committee Member	New York, NY 2025-present
Data2Go.NYC / Measure of America Advisory Panel Member	New York, NY 2024-present
Harvard Medical School, Essentials of the Profession course (Health Policy Unit) Substitute Small Group Discussion Leader & Grader	Boston, MA 2020-2023
Harvard University Ph.D. Program in Health Policy Co-coordinator of the Health Policy Peer Mentoring program Founder of the “How to PhD” seminar series for first-year PhD students Co-representative, Graduate Student Mental Health Survey Working Group	Cambridge, MA 2020-2021 2021-2023 2023