

Maria Teresa Peña, Ph.D., MSc

Research Assistant Professor

Texas A&M

College Station, Texas

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EDUCATION

- Ph.D. Health Economics (*Minors: Biostatistics; Health Services Research Quantitative Methods*)
Dept. of Management, Policy and Community Health
The University of Texas Health Science Center (HSC) at Houston, School of Public Health (Houston, TX, US), December 2022
Dissertation: Cost, utilization patterns, and cost-utility analysis of telemental health among older Medicare beneficiaries with major depression
- MSc Economics
Department of Economics
University College London (London, UK), September 2014
Dissertation: Remittances and Labour Supply (Evidence from Mexico using an instrumental variable approach)
- BA Economics, International Relations (Double major)
Department of Economics
University of California, College of Letters and Science (Davis, CA), June 2011

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

- May 2025- present *Research Assistant Professor*
Texas A&M
Department of Health Policy and Management
Population Informatics Lab (College Station, TX)
- Oct 2024- Jan 2025 *Senior Health Financing Advisor/Senior Health Economist*
USAID (Credence Management Solutions) (Washington, DC)
- Oct 2022- Oct 2024 *Senior Policy Analyst*
KFF (formerly known as Kaiser Family Foundation) (Washington, DC)
- Jan 2019-Oct 2022 *Graduate Research Assistant/Graduate Teaching Assistant*
Dept. of Management, Policy and Community Health
The University of Texas Health Science Center (HSC) at Houston, School of Public Health (Houston, TX, US)
- June 2022- April 2023 *Financial Protection Expert- Health Economist (remote)*
World Health Organization, Western Pacific Regional Office
(Manila, Philippines)

May 2022- Aug 2022	<i>Financial Protection Expert- Health Economist (remote)</i> World Health Organization, South-East Asia Regional Office (Delhi, India)
March 2020-Apr 2022	<i>Health Financing Consultant (remote)</i> World Health Organization, Western Pacific Regional Office (Manila, Philippines)
Aug 2019-Feb 2020	<i>Economic Analysis and Evaluation Short-Term Consultant (remote)</i> World Health Organization (WHO) Health Systems Governance and Financing (Geneva, Switzerland)
Feb 2016- July 2019	<i>Health Policy and Financing Consultant (Remote)</i> World Health Organization, Western Pacific Regional Office (Manila, Philippines)
May 2015-Sep 2015	<i>Health Policy and Financing Intern</i> World Health Organization, Western Pacific Regional Office (Manila, Philippines)

RESEARCH PROJECTS

Texas Medicaid 1115 Waiver 10 Year Extension Evaluation (2021-2030)

Texas HHSC (PI: Hye-Chung Kum)

Role: Research Faculty

Contribution: Leading analysis and coordination of the Medicare Managed care section

Texas Medicaid Fee-For-Service Non-Emergency Medical Transport (NEMT) Waiver Evaluation

Texas HHSC (PI: Hye-Chung Kum, Eva M. Shipp, Co-I: **Maria T. Peña**)

Role: Co-Investigator (Evaluator for NEMT program among FFS population)

Contribution: Led the coordination and execution of the evaluation, including drafting of the evaluation report, team organization, data analysis, and development of final recommendations and conclusions.

Evaluating the Impact of a Comprehensive D2C Telehealth Program on Maternal Health Outcomes in Rural Mississippi

Health Resources Service Administration HRSA 21-082 (PI: Tearsanee Carlisle Davis | Site-PI: **Maria T. Peña**) 2025-2026

Role: Site Principal Investigator (Lead Evaluator of maternal health program)

Contribution: Responsible for overseeing evaluation design and implementation, lead data analysis, coordinate reporting, and will synthesize findings to inform program improvement.

Health Resources Service Administration HRSA 21-082 (PI: Tearsanee Carlisle Davis | Site-PI: John M. Swint) 2021-2025

Role: Graduate Research Assistant (Grant Writing)

Contribution: Assisted in grant proposal development, literature review, and drafting project aims; supported early-phase project planning and reporting.

Economic evaluation of Telehealth of Programs in Rural Mississippi

Health Resources Service Administration HRSA 21-020 (PI: John M. Swint) 2021-2026

Role: Graduate Research Assistant (Grant Writing)

Contribution: Assisted in grant proposal development, literature review, and drafting project aims; supported early-phase project planning and reporting.

- *Center for Healthcare Data: Health of Texas Dashboard May 2021-Dec 2021*

Role: Graduate research assistant

- *Meadows Mental Health Project (Texas Medicaid/CHIP Severe Mental Illness Youth) - May 2019-Dec 2021*

Role: Graduate research assistant

- *External Quality Review Organization (EQRO) and Texas Health and Human Services (HHSC) Project (Texas Medicaid STAR+PLUS Population with Severe Mental Illness) - Jun 2019- Jan 2020*

Role: Graduate research assistant

- *“Serious and Persistent Mental Illness with Medicaid Managed Care: Descriptive Analysis and Policy Options for Texas.”*

Role: Graduate research assistant

- *Meadows Foundation and Texas Department Health and Human Services (PI: Robert O Morgan)*

Role: Graduate research assistant

- *Benefits of Stroke Treatment Delivered Using a Mobile Stroke Unit Compared to Standard Management by Emergency Medical Services: The BEST-MSU Study- Jan 2020-May 2020*

Role: Graduate research assistant

RESEARCH INTERESTS

- Healthcare insurance payment policy and reform
- Impact of telehealth on access, spending, and utilization
- Mental health care access
- Cost-Effectiveness Analysis (CEA), Cost-Utility Analysis use and methodology
- Impact and causal evaluation quantitative methods (applied econometrics methods)
- Medicare and Medicaid claims and expenditure analyses
- Delivery and financing of care for people who are eligible for both Medicare and Medicaid
- Measuring and assessing the financial risk of out-of-pocket payments

HONORS AND AWARDS

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|---|-----------|
| • Awarded Aurelia Murphy Killian Endowment in Public Health scholarship | 2021-2022 |
| • Doctoral Scholarship. Awarded outstanding new student scholarship | 2018-2019 |
| • Doctoral Scholarship. Awarded MPACH Department Scholarship | 2020-2021 |

PEER-REVIEWED JOURNAL PUBLICATIONS

1. **Peña MT**, Li R, Lindsay J, Deshmukh AA, Swint J, Morgan R (2023). Telemental Health Use Is Associated With Lower Health Care Spending Among Medicare Beneficiaries With Major Depression. *Medical Care*. 10.1097/MLR.0000000000001952, DOI: 10.1097/MLR.0000000000001952
2. Zhang, Y., **Peña, MT**, Fletcher, L., Lal, L., Swint, J., & Reneker, J. (2023). Economic evaluation and costs of remote patient monitoring for cardiovascular disease in the United States: A systematic review. *International Journal of Technology Assessment in Health Care*, 39(1), E25. doi:10.1017/S0266462323000156
3. Zhang Y, Chandra S, **Peña MT**, Lal L, Summers RL, Swint JM (2023). Framework for Evaluating and Developing Sustainable Telehealth Programs. *Telemed J E Health*. 2023 Jan 30. doi: 10.1089/tmj.2022.0407. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 36716266.
4. Zhang, Yunxi; **Peña, MT** ; Fletcher, Lauren M; Swint, John M.4; Reneker, Jennifer C. Cost of remote patient monitoring for cardiovascular disease: protocol, JBI Evidence Synthesis: February 09, 2022 - Volume - Issue - doi: 10.11124/JBIES-21-00322
5. Zhang Y, **Peña MT**, Lal LS, Lin YY, Summers RL, Saurabh C, Swint JM. Assessing Telemental Health Uptake and Associated Health Care Resource Implications among Mississippi Medicaid Enrollees with Major Depression. *Telemed J E Health*. 2024 Sep;30(9):2495-2501. doi: 10.1089/tmj.2024.0112. Epub 2024 Jun 27. PMID: 38934133.
6. Zhang Y, **Peña MT**, Lal LS, Lin YY, Summers RL, Chandra S, Swint JM. Telemental Health Services Usage and Association with Health Care Utilization and Expenditures Among Vulnerable Medicare Beneficiaries in 2019: A Comparative Study Using Propensity Score Matching. *Telemed J E Health*. 2024 Jun;30(7):1848-1856. doi: 10.1089/tmj.2023.0632. Epub 2024 Mar 28. PMID: 38546441.

PEER-REVIEWED PUBLISHED POLICY BRIEFS/REPORTS

1. A Burns, A Wolk, M O'Malley Watts, M Mohamed, **MT Peña** (2024). A Look at Waiting Lists for Medicaid Home- and Community-Based Services from 2016 to 2024. KFF.
2. A Burns, **MT Peña**, M Mohamed, M Freed, Meredith: O'Malley Watts (2024). What Are the Primary Medicaid Eligibility Pathways for Dual-Eligible Individuals? KFF.
3. **MT Peña**, M Mohamed, J Fuglesten Biniek, A Burns, J Cubanski, T Neuman (2024). The Landscape of Medicare and Medicaid Coverage Arrangements for Dual-Eligible Individuals Across States. KFF.
4. **MT Peña**, M Mohamed, A Burns (2024) How Does Use of Medicaid Wraparound Services by Dual-Eligible Individuals Vary by Service, State, and Enrollees' Demographics? KFF
5. WHO (2023). Progress towards universal health coverage: monitoring financial protection in the Western Pacific Region.
6. **MT Peña**, M Mohamed, J Fuglesten Biniek, J Cubanski, T Neuman (2023). How Do Dual-Eligible Individuals Get Their Medicare Coverage?. KFF
7. **MT Peña**, M Mohamed, A Burns, JF Biniek, N Ochieng, P Chidambaram (2023). A Profile of Medicare-Medicaid Enrollees (Dual Eligibles). KFF
8. **MT Peña**, M Mohamed, J Fuglesten Biniek, A Burns, J Cubanski (2023). Medicaid Arrangements to Coordinate Medicare and Medicaid for Dual-Eligible Individuals. KFF
9. **MT Peña**, M Mohamed, A Burns, J Cubanski, N Sroczynski (2023). Enrollment and Spending Patterns Among Medicare-Medicaid Enrollees (Dual Eligibles). KFF
10. WHO South-East Asia Regional Office (2022). Chapter: Financial protection in SEARO: leaving no one behind .

11. WHO Western Pacific Regional Office (2022). Mongolia trends in health service utilization, out-of-pocket spending, catastrophic spending and impoverishment due to health payments 2009-2018
12. WHO Western Pacific Regional Office. Australia trends in out-of-pocket spending, catastrophic spending and impoverishment due to health payments 2009-2015 (*In progress*)
13. UHealth School of Public Health (2020). “Quarterly Topic Report 1: Spending, Service Delivery, and Follow-up for STAR+PLUS Members with Severe Mental Illness” . Texas Health and Human Services.
14. WHO Western Pacific Regional Office (2019). “Financial health protection in Cambodia 2009-2016: analysis of data from the Cambodia Socioeconomic Survey”
15. WHO Western Pacific Regional Office (2018). “Health financing regional profile 2018: transitioning to integrated financing and service delivery of priority public health services”
16. OECD/WHO. Chapter 6 (2018). “Health at a glance: Asia/Pacific 2018: Measuring progress towards Universal Health Coverage”.
17. Regional framework for action on transitioning to integrated financing of priority public health services in the Western Pacific (2018). Manila. World Health Organization Regional Office for the Western Pacific Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO.
18. WPRO. (2017). Technical Workshop on Indicators, Data and Methods for Monitoring SDGs and UHC in the WPR, Manila, Philippines 24-26 May 2017: meeting report.

SELECTED MEDIA COVERAGE RELATED TO RESEARCH WORK

- **Tradeoffs** podcast, Can Washington Make Medicare and Medicaid Work Better Together?
- **NYT**, “Pressed by Lawmakers, R.F.K. Jr. Fumbles Details of Key Health Programs”
- **NPR**, “She has Medicare and Medicaid. So why should it take 18 months to get a wheelchair?”
- **Statnews**, “Medicare Advantage plans for dual-eligible enrollees set to get Senate scrutiny”
- **The Journalist Resource**, “Pandemic provisions reduced loss of Medicaid coverage for beneficiaries enrolled in both Medicaid and Medicare, study finds”
- **Association of Healthcare Journalism**, “Clearing up confusion about dual eligibles”

PEER-REVIEWED ABSTRACT PUBLICATIONS

1. **Peña MT**, Li R, Lindsay J, Deshmukh AA, Swint J, Morgan R. Association of Telemental Health Use With Health Care Spending in the Medicare Population with Major Depression, APHA November 6–9, 2022, Boston, MA.
2. **Peña MT**, Lindsay J, Li R, Deshmukh AA, Swint J, Morgan R. Telemental Health Providers Prior to and During the COVID-19 Pandemic Among Medicare Beneficiaries With Major Depression, Society of Medical Decision Making, 2022, Seattle, WA.
3. Zhang, Y., **Peña, M.T.**, Fletcher, L.M., Lal, L., Swint, J.M. & Reneker, J.C. (2022). Economic evaluation of remote patient monitoring for cardiovascular disease: a systematic review, APHA November 6–9, 2022, Boston, MA.

TECHNICAL INPUTS TO REPORTS AND PUBLICATIONS

- Cambodia national health accounts, 2012-2016: health expenditure report (2018). Manila, Philippines. World Health Organization Regional Office for the Western Pacific.
- Lao PDR National health accounts report FY 2012-2016 (2017). Think Well.

- Wagstaff A, Flores G et al. Progress on Catastrophic health spending in 133 countries: a retrospective observational study (2017). Lancet Global Health.
- New Perspectives on Global Health Spending for Universal Health Coverage (2017). Geneva: World Health Organization

TEACHING AND MENTORING EXPERIENCE

Texas A&M School of Public Health

Co-instructor

Spring 2026 Health Policy and Politics (MPH)

The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston

Graduate Teaching Associate/Co-Instructor

Spring 2022 US Healthcare Payment Systems and Policy (MPH/PhD)
Fall 2021 US Healthcare Payment Systems and Policy (MPH)

Fall 2021 Health Survey Research Design (PhD)

Graduate Teaching Assistant

Spring 2021 Health Policy in the United States (MPH/PhD)
Spring 2021 Health Service Delivery and Performance (MPH/PhD)
Fall 2020 Health Survey Research Design (PhD)
Spring 2019 Health Policy in the United States (MPH/PhD)
Spring 2019 Economic, Social Determinants of Health (MPH/PhD)
Summer 2019 Cost-Effectiveness Analysis (MPH/PhD)

Peer mentorship program

2021-2022 Peer mentor to a PhD student at UTHealth

GUEST LECTURES AND PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS

- **Pena M.** Methods of Economic Evaluation in Clinical Research. “Economic issues and use of economic evaluations in LMICs”. MS in Clinical Research. UTH McGovern 2022 Spring
- **Pena M.** Methods of Economic Evaluation in Clinical Research. “Economic issues and use of economic evaluations in LMICs”. MS in Clinical Research. UTH McGovern 2020 Spring
- **Pena M, Suk R.** “Statistical methods in Health Economics”. MPH and PhD students. Health Economics. UTHealth SPH. 2020 Spring
- **Pena M.** (Freelance Consultant). “Feasibility of monitoring financial protection: what household surveys and data are available in the Western Pacific region?” *Workshop on Designing financial protection policies*. 10 September 2019. Manila, Philippines
- **Pena M.** (Consultant, WHO Western Pacific Regional Office). “Transition to Sustainable Domestic Financing”. *Malaria Programme Managers Meeting to Review Progress on Implementation of the Regional Action Framework for Malaria Control and Elimination in the Western Pacific 2016-2020*. 27 June 2018. Manila, Philippines
- Mueller M (OECD) and **Pena M.** (Consultant, WHO Western Pacific Regional Office). “Primary health care Expenditures”. *14th Annual Meeting of the Asia Pacific Health Accounts Experts*. 25 April 2018. Seoul, Republic of Korea.

- **Pena M.** (Consultant, WHO Western Pacific Regional Office). “Health Accounts in the Western Pacific Region”. *13th Annual Meeting of the Asia Pacific Health Accounts Experts*. 16 June 2016. Seoul, Republic of Korea.

REVIEWER

Ad hoc reviewer for Health Policy editorial office of Social Science & Medicine and the Joanna Briggs Institute.

CERTIFICATES

- Online Advanced Methods for Cost-Effectiveness Analysis, University of York Center of Health Economics, December 2021

CONFERENCES, WORKSHOPS, AND TRAININGS

Presented, led panel discussion, and facilitated training and conferences on UHC/SDG indicator methodology on financial protection monitoring, National Health Accounts, Health Financing Policy for UHC, Universal Health Coverage, Sustainable Domestic Financing

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP

Member, AcademyHealth	2022-present
Member, International Health Economic Association	2020-2023
Member, American Society of Health Economists	2022-2023
Treasurer, AcademyHealth	2019-2021
Member, American Public Health Association	2019-2022

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Programming/Software:

Stata, SAS, TreeAge, R

Language:

Native/Professional: English and Spanish

Intermediate: French

VOLUNTEERING EXPERIENCE

- Organized a fundraiser during the COVID-19 lockdown in El Salvador in April 2020: raised over \$10,000 to distribute basic food packages to over 800 families 2020
- Volunteered to teach English classes to students in San Juan Opico, El Salvador with Glasswings, El Salvador 2011