

Matt Brown

University of Connecticut
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EDUCATION

Ph.D. in Economics	University of Connecticut	May 2026 (expected)
M.P.P.A. in Public Policy	University of Massachusetts Amherst	2018–2020
B.A. in Film & Media Culture	Middlebury College	2003–2008

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Health Economics, Public Policy, Labor Economics, Applied Microeconomics

REFERENCES

Delia Furtado (Co-chair)
Department of Economics
University of Connecticut
delia.furtado@uconn.edu

Michele Baggio
Department of Economics
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Bokyung Kim (Co-chair)
Department of Economics
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Spencer Cooper
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JOB MARKET PAPER

The Effect of Recreational Marijuana Laws on Schizophrenia & Psychotic Disorders (*Revise and Re-submit at the American Journal of Health Economics*)

Amid the ongoing liberalization of state recreational marijuana laws (RMLs), the National Institutes of Health has expressed concern that expanded marijuana access may elevate the prevalence of schizophrenia and psychotic disorders across the United States. This study presents one of the first causal estimates of the impact of RMLs on the incidence of schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders. Leveraging a generalized difference-in-differences framework to exploit the staggered rollout of RMLs, I first document that the passage of RMLs with recreational dispensaries generates a 20% increase in the rate of prior-month marijuana use in treated states relative to controls. Next, I show that RML adoption with dispensaries leads to a 12% increase in the incidence of schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders at state-sponsored mental health facilities nationwide. These findings suggest that RMLs permitting dispensaries may have unintended adverse effects on the prevalence of schizophrenia.

WORKING PAPERS

Recreational Marijuana Laws and Workplace Absence (SSRN Working Paper #5263799)

A near majority of states have now passed recreational marijuana laws (RMLs), but their impact on labor market behavior remains unclear. This study provides new causal evidence on the relationship between RMLs and workplace absence. Leveraging a generalized difference-in-differences framework to exploit the staggered rollout of RMLs, I first document that state adoption of RMLs with recreational dispensaries generates a 50% increase in the rate of prior-month adult marijuana use in treated states relative to control states. Next, I show that RML adoption with dispensaries leads to a 9% increase in the incidence of prior-week workplace absence. Supplemental analyses of health outcomes support a mechanism consistent with these findings, revealing increases in self-reported physical and mental health problems and declines in general health and exercise following legalization. These findings suggest that marijuana legalization may affect labor market outcomes along margins not typically captured by employment status alone.

The Effects of Cannabis Legalization on Substantiated Child Maltreatment (Working Paper)

As more states adopt recreational marijuana laws (RMLs), concerns remain about how expanded cannabis access may affect child welfare. This study presents new causal evidence on the relationship between RMLs and substantiated cases of child neglect. Leveraging a generalized difference-in-differences framework that exploits the staggered rollout of RMLs across states, I first show that legalization accompanied by recreational dispensary openings increases the rate of adult marijuana use in treated states relative to control states. I then find that RML adoption with dispensary access leads to an increase of approximately two cases of substantiated child maltreatment per 1,000 children, primarily driven by increased neglect. Supplementary evidence from time-use data suggests that reductions in parental caregiving time may help explain this pattern. These findings suggest that increased child maltreatment among families exposed to expanded cannabis access may be an unintended consequence of marijuana legalization.

SELECTED WORK IN PROGRESS

Teaching Economics Majors Principles of Writing and Data Visualization (with Oskar Harmon)

The Effects of Recreational Marijuana Laws on Human Capital (with Michele Baggio & Alberto Chong)

The Effect of Psilocybin Decriminalization Laws on PTSD and Depression

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

University of Connecticut (Instructor)

Principles of Macroeconomics	Summer 2025
Writing in Economics: Analyzing Inequality	Fall 2025
Writing in Economics: Analyzing Inequality (<i>4.9/5 course eval</i>)	Spring 2025
Writing in Economics (<i>4.8/5 course eval</i>)	Fall 2024
Writing in Economics (<i>5.0/5 course eval</i>)	Spring 2024

University of Connecticut (Teaching Assistant)

Intermediate Microeconomics, Prof. Tianxu Chen	Spring 2023
Labor Economics, Prof. Tianxu Chen	Spring 2023
Contemporary Problems in Economics, Prof. Derek Johnson	Fall 2022
Introduction to Microeconomics, Prof. Derek Johnson	Spring 2022
Introduction to Microeconomics, Prof. Owen Svaalstad	Fall 2021

University of Massachusetts, Amherst (Teaching Assistant)

Statistical Methods in Public Policy, Prof. Michael Ash	Spring 2020
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INVITED SEMINARS AND CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

2026	American Economic Association ASSA Annual Meeting, Philadelphia (scheduled)
2025	Virtual Economics of Poverty and Policy Seminar (VEPPS) (scheduled)
2025	American Society of Health Economists (ASHEcon) Annual Conference, Nashville

AWARDS, FELLOWSHIPS, AND GRANTS

2025	W. Harrison Carter Award for Excellence in Teaching, University of Connecticut
2023	W. Harrison Carter Award for Excellence in Teaching, University of Connecticut
2022-2025	Eleanor Bloom Summer Fellowship in Economics, University of Connecticut
2018	Commonwealth Policy Fellowship, School of Public Policy, University of Massachusetts Amherst

SKILLS

Coding:	Stata, MATLAB, Python, L ^A T _E X
Language:	English (native)

OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

June 2009 – March 2020	Sodexo Management, Inc. — Technical Writer
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OTHER

Citizenship:	United States
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