

**Project Name: “Understanding the Impact of the Inception of Medicaid”**  
**Professor Amanda Kowalski**

**Wonho Choi, Class of 2016**

**Overview of Project:**

XIX, commonly known as Medicaid, was established in 1965 as part of the Social Security Act. Title XIX provided federal grants for state-run medical assistance programs. Each state administered its own program, and set its own eligibility guideline. Therefore, state-level analysis is necessary in order to fully understand the long-term impact of Medicaid. My role in this project was to develop a calculator that would measure Medicaid eligibility, varied by state and year.

**Responsibilities:**

My primary duty for this project was to collect and enter state-level data for the ‘Medicaid calculator’, a calculator that measures Medicaid eligibility that varies across states and time. The process involved the collection of state-level Medicaid data for income eligibility, aggregate expenditure, and total enrollment. The project also involved data entry of health insurance data.

**Learnings:**

The project involved the collection and entry of data series that were often discontinuous. Consequently, there was a constant need to validate data sources, and to keep track of recent updates. I learned how to navigate various health-related data sources, and to extract a consistent data series from varying sources. I was also able to improve my documentation skills.

At the very beginning of the project, Professor Kowalski mentioned the importance of perseverance and the attitude of not taking “no” for an answer. I tried to maintain this mentality throughout the project. In retrospect, I feel that having the proper research attitude was just as important as learning research skills.

**Overall Experience:**

Needless to say, my experience working as Professor Kowalski’s research assistant was very rewarding. It was truly exciting to be able to work closely with an active researcher in the field of economics. I particularly feel that my SRO experience was enhanced due to the supportive atmosphere of Professor Kowalski’s research team. Research requires a lot of individual effort, thus the process can be lonely at times. During my SRO experience, however, help and support was readily available. Professor Kowalski was always accessible and her graduate research assistants were very friendly and helpful. I realized that research not only involves individual effort, but also team effort.