Mathematica informs evidence-based decision making through rigorous studies and analyses. Mathematica’s Research in Review is a snapshot of some of this year’s research results.

**DISABILITY**

**New Longitudinal Data Highlight SSI Beneficiaries Finding Work, Leaving the Rolls**

Over the past decade, the Social Security Administration (SSA) has implemented policies and programs designed to encourage Supplemental Security Income (SSI) beneficiaries to return to work. A longitudinal study prepared for SSA as part of the evaluation of the Ticket to Work program finds substantially more work than previously understood or identified by cross-sectional statistics.

SSI awardees under age 40 are much more likely than older awardees to leave the SSI rolls for at least a month because of work.

**MFP Transitions to Community Care Increasing**

A new report prepared for the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services evaluates the Money Follows the Person (MFP) demonstration, a major federal initiative in 44 states that is designed to give people needing long-term services and supports more choice about where they live and receive care. The evaluation finds that the number of transitions to community-based care increased substantially from 2010 to 2011.

**EARLY CHILDHOOD**

**Effective Strategies for Supporting Children Who Are Dual Language Learners**

In a study funded by First 5 LA, Mathematica identified five central instructional practices to support Dual Language Learners (DLLs). We implemented innovative research methods to document these practices in Los Angeles Universal Preschool programs, including the types of language children hear and important aspects of interactions between individual children and caregivers in the classroom.

60% of teachers reported talking with DLLs in their home language at least once a day.

Meaningful talk about book content is evident in 43% of classrooms.

Cumulative community transitions increased 65% 2010 to 2011.
The Changing Characteristics of Head Start Children and Families

Providing insight into how the Head Start program operates, Mathematica conducts research for the Administration for Children and Families through the Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES) to measure the individual, family, and programmatic factors that contribute to school readiness. Our longitudinal research found that more than a quarter of newly entering Head Start children in 2009 live in households where a language other than English is primarily spoken to them, significantly more than in fall 2000. Data also confirm that about one-third (34%) of children entering Head Start for the first time are overweight or obese. Link to study

Common Practices of Effective CMOs

Mathematica’s research for the National Study of Charter Management Organization (CMO) Effectiveness, commissioned by NewSchools Venture Fund, finds that CMOs with the greatest positive impact on student achievement are most likely to establish consistent school-wide behavior expectations for students, as well as an intense approach to monitoring and coaching teachers. The latest report offers valuable guidance for schools and districts looking to replicate these promising practices. Link to study

Factors Associated with Disconnectedness

- Work history
- Human capital
- Policy environment
- Economic conditions

Women with more work history and human capital have higher probability of leaving disconnected status for employment.

44% of the sample was disconnected during at least one follow-up survey.
International

The Ananya program in Bihar, India, is funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and intended to improve health outcomes in the state, which is India’s third largest. Nearly 90% of Bihar’s 83 million people live in rural areas. Baseline findings from our evaluation of the program indicate the challenges to be addressed in maternal and child health.

Since 2006, Mathematica has been working with the Kaiser Family Foundation staff to monitor trends in Medicare Advantage plan availability and enrollment. Despite concerns about the effect of reductions in payments to Medicare Advantage plans that resulted from the health reform law, enrollment has continued to increase, and premiums have continued to decrease in 2012.

Connecting Tanzanians to Grid Electricity

The Millennium Challenge Corporation is funding a $207 million energy sector project in Tanzania, a country struggling with high rates of poverty. Mathematica is evaluating the project, including two of its major components—rehabilitation and extension of the electricity transmission and distribution network, and a customer-connection financing scheme initiative. Estimates to date indicate substantial potential savings for consumers, but large fixed costs for connecting to the grid. The evaluation will estimate impacts of reducing these connection costs using a rigorous random assignment design.

Medicare Advantage Enrollment Increases, Premiums Decrease

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Creating Opportunities for Youth Employment

To help increase employment among youth, states received $1.2 billion in funding for the workforce investment system to provide employment opportunities targeted to disadvantaged youth. For the Department of Labor, Mathematica conducted analyses of Recovery Act-funded youth summer jobs programs, including Indian and Native American (INA) employment initiatives, that indicate the potential of these programs to reverse the steep decline in youth employment.

Improving Cost Effectiveness, Outcomes of Individual Job Training Accounts

Eligible job seekers in the U.S. could realize potential net benefits over 20 years of about $41,000 per person if local workforce training agencies implemented training programs that combine higher, more flexible individual limits for expenditures on state-approved training with support from training counselors.

Nutrition

Changing the Cafeteria Culture: Progress in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP)

In a study conducted for the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Food and Nutrition Service, findings from the fourth School Nutrition Dietary Assessment (SNDA-IV) reveal that schools have made substantial progress toward meeting the federal standard for saturated fat in school lunches. Many schools that did not meet the standard came close (within 10 percent).

Characteristics and Patterns of Healthy Eaters in the Low-Income Population

In an analysis for the Food and Nutrition Service, Mathematica reviewed sociodemographic and dietary characteristics of healthy eaters from households with income below 200 percent of the federal poverty level and described their distinct dietary patterns.