

Emma M. Achola-Kothari

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Education

Vanderbilt University

Ph.D., Health Policy & Health Services Research

Expected May 2025

- **Dissertation title:** “The role of networks and serious illness in Medicare Advantage disenrollment”
- **Dissertation committee:** Laura Keohane (Chair), Stacie Dusetzina, John Graves, David Stevenson

Duke University

Bachelor of Arts, Public Policy Studies

May 2017

Professional Experience

Vanderbilt University, *Graduate Research Assistant*, Nashville, TN

August 2021-Present

- Published multiple articles in high impact journals on Medicare Advantage, post-acute care, and Medicare enrollment choices.
- Led analyses in Medicare administrative data, using causal inference methods, that investigated the effect of MA enrollment policies on plan enrollment choices among beneficiaries using post-acute care.
- Examined nationally representative survey data to assess the association between Medicare enrollment choices and beneficiary access to care, financial burden, and post-acute care outcomes.

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, *Student Trainee, Health Insurance*, Nashville, TN

July 2023-September 2023

- Prepared detailed policy briefs outlining the Food and Drug Administration’s drug approval process, highlighting potential program integrity vulnerabilities due to Medicare coverage of high-cost Alzheimer’s drugs.
- Analyzed regulations pertaining to new Medicare coverage categories for lymphedema treatment supplies and identified potential program integrity issues for consideration.

American Medical Group Association (AMGA), *Coordinator, Regulatory Affairs*, Alexandria, VA

May 2019-August 2021

- Provided technical and policy support to AMGA members, including c-suite executives, on various regulatory and policy changes made by federal agencies that impact physicians (e.g., the Physician Fee Schedule, Quality Payment Program, and MA).
- Crafted comment letters to federal agencies during the rulemaking process promoting AMGA’s regulatory priorities.
- Collaborated with other trade associations on advocacy efforts and crafting policy messages for policymakers on Capitol Hill.

Medicare Payment Advisory Commission (MedPAC), *Research Assistant*, Washington, DC

June 2017- April 2019

- Collaborated with senior analysts to research and develop monthly reports on Medicare-focused topics (e.g., accountable care organizations, long-term care hospitals, low-value care and coverage policy) and presented research findings during public commission meetings and internal team meetings.
- Analyzed CMS datasets, including Open Payments data and Part D prescriber data, to investigate the relationship between prescriber behavior and payments from drug manufacturers.
- Created and implemented new training plan for incoming research assistants and managed hiring process.

Leadership Experience

President, Vanderbilt University Student Chapter of AcademyHealth (2022-2023)

- Launched student chapter and grew membership to over 10 members.
- Organized bi-monthly health policy-centered events for membership.

Peer-reviewed publications

- **EM Achola**, SA Jazowski, LH Nicholas, LM Keohane, WA Wood, CR Friese, SB Dusetzina. Evaluating Access to Care for Medicare Beneficiaries Under 65. In Press at American Journal of Managed Care.
- D Kim, DJ Meyers, LM Keohane, H Varma, **EM Achola**, AN Trivedi. Medicare Advantage enrollment and outcomes of post-acute nursing home care among patients with dementia. *Health Aff Sch*. 2024 Jun 13;2(6). doi: 10.1093/haschl/qxae084.
- Shelley A Jazowski, **EM Achola**, Lauren H Nicholas, William A Wood, Christopher R Friese, Stacie B Dusetzina, Comparing Medicare Plan Selection Among Beneficiaries with and without a History of Cancer, *Health Affairs Scholar*, 2024; <https://doi.org/10.1093/haschl/qxae014>
- **EM Achola**, KN Griffith, JO Wrenn, CR Mitchell, D Schwartz, CL Roumie. Injuries From Legal Interventions Involving Conducted Energy Devices. *JAMA Intern Med*. Published online February 05, 2024. doi:10.1001/jamainternmed.2023.8012.
* Covered by multiple media outlets including AP News and Fortune

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- **EM Achola**, DG, Stevenson, LM Keohane. Postacute Services Use and Outcomes Among Traditional Medicare and Medicare Advantage Beneficiaries. JAMA Health Forum. 2023 Aug 4;4(8):e232517.
* Cited by 10 United States Senators in [letter](#) to federal administrative leadership calling for Medicare Advantage reforms

Other Articles and Works

- MB, Buntin, **EM Achola**, K Baig, K Lou. Policy Options for Addressing Medicare Hospital Insurance Trust Fund Insolvency. Issue brief produced with funding from Arnold Ventures. August 2022.

Work in Progress

- **EM, Achola**, AN Trivedi, D Kim, DJ Meyers, H Varma, LM Keohane. The Effect of Extending the Window to Disenroll from Medicare Advantage among Post-Acute Users. Under Review.

Conference Presentations

- Evaluating Access to Care for Medicare Beneficiaries Under 65. Oral presentation at AcademyHealth Annual Research Meeting. June 30, 2024.
- The Effect of Extending the Window to Disenroll from Medicare Advantage among Post-Acute Users. Poster at AcademyHealth Annual Research Meeting. June 30, 2024.
- Enrollment choices of non-dual Medicare beneficiaries under age 65. Oral presentation at American Society of Health Economists Annual Conference. June 19, 2024.
- The Effect of Extending the Window to Disenroll from Medicare Advantage among Post-Acute Users. Oral presentation at American Society of Health Economists Annual Conference. June 18, 2024.
- Differences in self-reported post-acute use and outcomes among traditional Medicare and Medicare Advantage beneficiaries. Oral Presentation at AcademyHealth Annual Research Meeting. June 27, 2023.
- Burden of injury due to U.S. legal interventions involving a conducted energy device. Poster at AcademyHealth Annual Research Meeting. June 26, 2023.
- Differences in self-reported post-acute use and outcomes among traditional Medicare and Medicare Advantage beneficiaries. Poster at American Society of Health Economists Annual Conference. June 13, 2023.

Other presentations

- Postacute Services Use and Outcomes Among Traditional Medicare and Medicare Advantage Beneficiaries. Presentation at AWARD Network Webinar. October 4, 2023
- Differences in post-acute use and outcomes among traditional Medicare and Medicare Advantage beneficiaries. Poster at Vanderbilt Translational Research Forum. Nashville, TN. October 21, 2022.

External Funding

- The Role of Networks and Serious Illness in Medicare Advantage Disenrollment. National Institute on Aging, 1R36 AG090851-01. **Project PI: Emma Achola-Kothari, BA (Grant impact score: 25)** Awaiting notice of funding
- Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Treatment and Outcomes in America: Changing Policies and Systems. National Institute on Aging, P01AG027296. Project PI: Amal Trivedi, MD, MPH; Site PI: Laura Keohane, PhD 2022-2023

Honors and Fellowships

- Diversity Scholar, American Society of Health Economists 2024
- Vanderbilt University Provost's Graduate Fellowship, Russell G. Hamilton Scholar 2021-Present
- Dean's List; Duke University 2017

Skills: STATA, SAS, Microsoft Office, Medicare administrative data analysis

Professional memberships: American Society of Health Economists, AcademyHealth