Maya Rossin-Slater Receives the 2023 Elaine Bennett Research Prize

Maya Rossin-Slater, Associate Professor in the Department of Health Policy at Stanford University and Senior Fellow at the Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research, is the recipient of the 2023 Elaine Bennett Research Prize. Established in 1998, the Elaine Bennett Research Prize recognizes and honors outstanding research in any field of economics. Professor Rossin-Slater will formally accept the Prize at the Business Meeting and Award Ceremony of the American Economic Association (AEA) Committee on the Status of Women in the Economics Profession (CSWEP), held during the 2024 AEA/ASSA Meetings on January 6, 2024, at 12:30 pm CST.

Professor Rossin-Slater is a leading economist working at the intersection of health economics and public economics. Her work has centered on understanding how public policies and other events influence the outcomes of families with children, with a particular focus on estimating intergenerational and long-term impacts for disadvantaged populations. Her studies have analyzed social safety net programs, family leave policies, environmental factors, stress, and gun violence. Her research addresses questions of critical policy importance with clever research designs and novel identification strategies, careful econometric work using high-quality administrative data, and analysis grounded in economic theory. Over the past decade, she has published over 30 refereed papers. Through her work, she has created large, linked datasets, which has also allowed others to study similar questions using U.S. administrative data.

Professor Rossin-Slater has made significant contributions to understanding the importance of fetal and childhood events for an individual's future, including economically significant outcomes such as employment and education. Her paper "Every Breath You Take – Every Dollar You'll Make: The Long-Term Consequences of the Clean Air Act of 1970," published in the *Journal of Political Economy* and a companion paper published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, coauthored with Adam Isen and Reed Walker, are the first to estimate the long-run impacts of early life exposure to air pollution and extreme temperature, respectively. In the first study, the authors focus on the impacts of the Clean Air Act Amendments (CAAA), which mandated that counties with air pollution levels exceeding attainment targets were required to undertake abatement activities. In contrast, counties that had air pollution levels just below the targets were not required to do so. They leverage this variation across counties and use a difference-in-difference approach that compares cohorts born just before and after these significant changes across nonattainment counties compared to attainment counties. They use administrative

data from the Longitudinal Employer Household Dynamics dataset that allows them to observe adult outcomes linked to location and exact date of birth for 5.7 million individuals born around the time of the policy change. They find that in utero exposure to air pollution has a statistically significant, economically meaningful, and persistent impact on labor market outcomes 30 years after birth. The magnitudes suggest that this policy's cumulative lifetime income gain is approximately $4,300 in present value terms per person or $6.5 billion for each affected cohort. The *PNAS* article, "Relationship Between Season of Birth, Temperature Exposure, and Later Life Wellbeing," uses a similar research design based on variation in exposure to extreme temperatures across counties and over time to show that in utero exposure to temperature above 32 degrees C reduces age-30 earnings.

An important strand of Professor Rossin-Slater's research is concerned with estimating the causal impacts of safety net programs on a range of parental and child outcomes. She has studied the Medicaid program, the Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, & Children (WIC), and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as Food Stamps). Her paper "WIC in Your Neighborhood: New Evidence on the Impacts of Geographic Access to Clinics," published in the *Journal of Public Economics,* provides evidence on the impact of WIC maternal behaviors and infant health outcomes. Using individual-level Vital Statistics data from all Texas births, she matches these records to information about openings and closings of WIC clinics. She shows that when nearby WIC clinics closed, women were less likely to use WIC, had lower weight gain during pregnancy, and their infants had lower birth weight. In another paper, "Is the Social Safety Net a Long-Term Investment? Large-Scale Evidence from the Food Stamps Program," forthcoming in the *Review of Economic Studies*, she and coauthors Martha Bailey, Hilary Hoynes, and Reed Walker examine how access to the Food Stamps Program in early childhood impacts long-term educational, economic and health outcomes. They use linked administrative and survey datasets covering 43 million Americans and merge it to information on the county-by-county roll-out of the Food Stamps program between 1961 and 1975. They find that greater access to Food Stamps in utero and in early childhood is associated with significant improvements in adult measures of well-being and life expectancy.

Professor Rossin-Slater has also contributed to the understanding of the effects of in utero exposure to stress. In "Family Ruptures, Stress, and the Mental Health of the Next Generation," published in the *American Economic Review*, Professor Rossin-Slater and coauthor Petra Persson document how maternal bereavement stress stemming from the death of a family member can affect the long-run outcomes of the children who experience those shocks while in utero. The authors use administrative data from Sweden, where they can identify the precise timing of deaths of relatives of the mother and follow the life trajectories of the children impacted by these deaths. To isolate the effects of prenatal exposure and account for unobserved determinants of family deaths, they compare children who experience these deaths while they are in utero to those who experience them in the first year of life. They find that children of mothers who experience the death of a

family member during pregnancy are more likely to be treated for ADHD in childhood and more likely to be treated for anxiety and depression in adulthood, with more significant effects for deaths of relatives that are closer to the mother (in terms of the family tree). While this is a very specific example of stress, it speaks to the broader conjecture that stress exposure may play an important role in intergenerational transmission of socioeconomic status and health.

Professor Rossin-Slater is also a leading expert on the effects of paid family leave and other family policies, and has published numerous papers on family leave (one paper published in the *Journal of Health Economics*, three papers published in the *Journal of Public Policy and Management,* one published in the *Journal of Econometrics*, and one conditionally accepted at *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics,* along with several review articles including a chapter in the Oxford Handbook of Women and the Economy), child support (a paper published in the *Journal of Public Economics*), and paternity establishment (papers published in *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics* and *PLoS One*. In recent years, Professor Rossin-Slater has expanded her research agenda to study the impacts of violence, including assaults during pregnancy (a paper published in the *Review of Economics and Statistics*) and school shootings (a paper published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* and one under revision at the *Review of Economic Studies*).

Professor Rossin-Slater received her Ph.D. in Economics from Columbia University in 2013. Among her many honors is receiving a National Science Foundation Career Award. She is currently co-editor of the *Journal of Human Resources and* an Associate Editor at the *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics* and *Journal of Health Economics*.

CSWEP awards the Elaine Bennett Research Prize in memory of Elaine Bennett, who made significant contributions to economic theory and experimental economics during her short professional career and mentored many women economists at the start of their careers. The prize is given every year to a woman economist not more than ten years beyond her Ph.D. (with adjustments for family responsibilities and/or medical leaves). Previous winners of this prize are Rebecca Diamond (Stanford), Stefanie Stantcheva (Harvard), Melissa Dell (Harvard), Marina Halac (Yale), Emi Nakamura (UC Berkeley), Anna Mikusheva (MIT), Erica Field (Duke University), Amy Finkelstein (MIT), Monika Piazzesi (Stanford University), Marianne Bertrand (University of Chicago), Esther Duflo (MIT), Susan Athey (Stanford University), and Judith Chevalier (Yale University).