

CAPS/CPR Seminar

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Time: 12:00pm - 1:00pm EST

Hybrid: Global Collaboratory - 060 Eggers Hall

Zoom - <https://syracuseuniversity.zoom.us/j/94621605062?>



State Sentencing Policies and Racial Disparities in Birth Outcomes

Abstract: U.S. states adopted a number of tough on crime policies in the early 1990s, including truth-in-sentencing and three strikes policies. While the impacts of these policies on crime and incarceration have been previously studied, less is known about their impacts on health outcomes. These policies may influence health through a myriad of ways, including through changes in community incarceration rates and crime rates or stigmatization. In this study, we use detailed birth certificate data along with quasi-experimental research methods to examine the impacts of state truth-in-sentencing and three strike policies on birth outcomes by race. We find evidence of positive impacts of truth-in-sentencing policies on gestational age among White and Black infants born to mothers with less than a college education. The findings highlight the heterogeneous nature of tough-on-crime policies and the varied mechanisms by which they might pattern health and racial health disparities.

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