



### Pulling Together:

Linking Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Administrative Data to Study Effects of the Great Recession

**Theresa Anderson\***

Social Science Analyst, [tanderson@ers.usda.gov](mailto:tanderson@ers.usda.gov)

**John A. Kirlin\***

Economist, [jkirlin@ers.usda.gov](mailto:jkirlin@ers.usda.gov)

**Michael Wiseman§**

Research Professor of Public Policy, Public Administration,  
and Economics, [wisemanm@qwu.edu](mailto:wisemanm@qwu.edu)

\* Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture

§ The George Washington University

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The views expressed in this presentation reflect those of the authors and do not represent any official positions of the Economic Research Service, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, or the George Washington University.

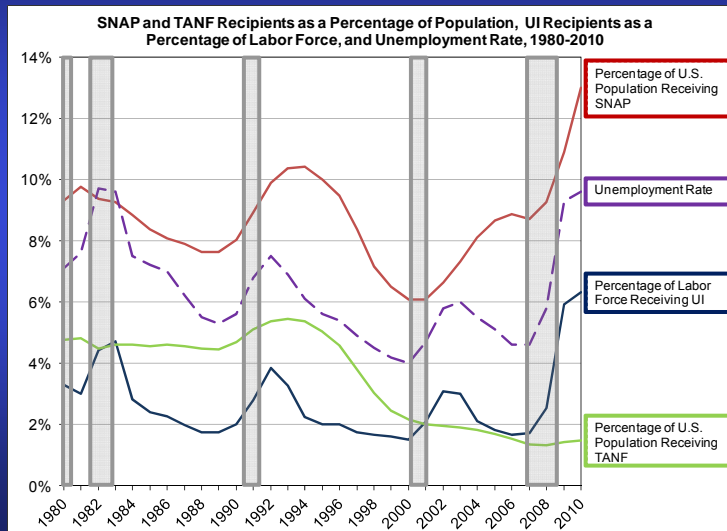


### This Presentation: Outline

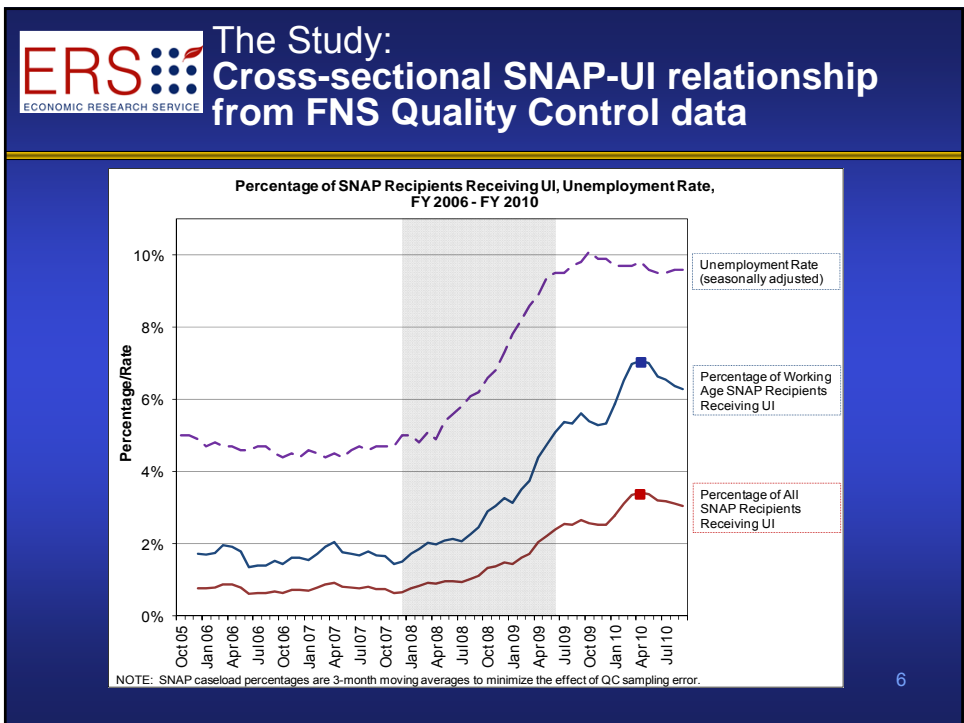
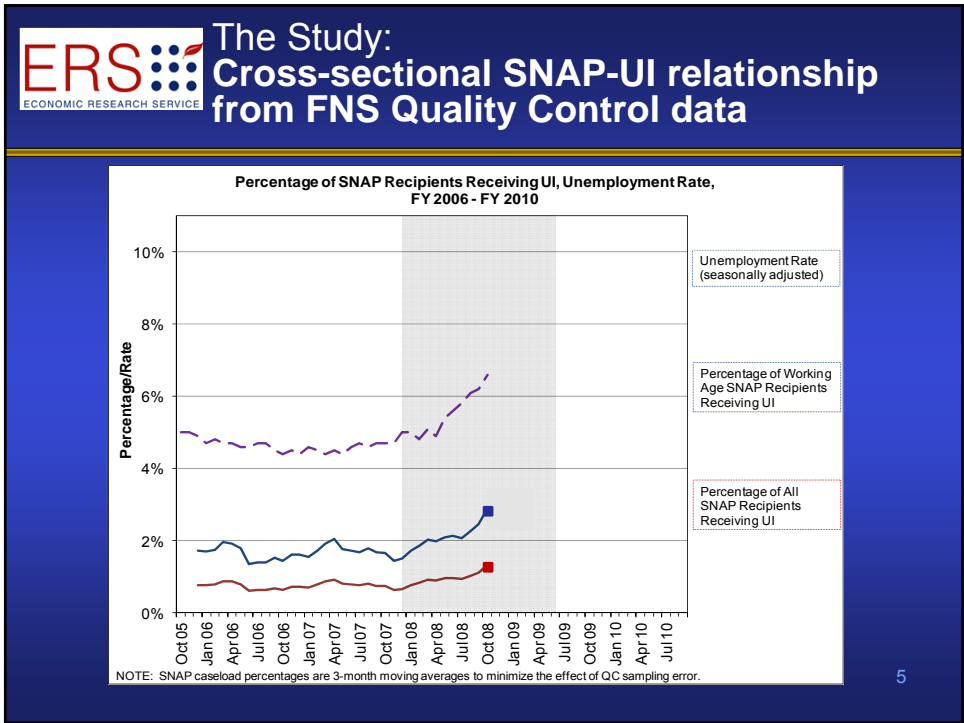
- Project Overview
- “The Three C’s” of Administrative Data
- Preliminary Project Results
- Implications

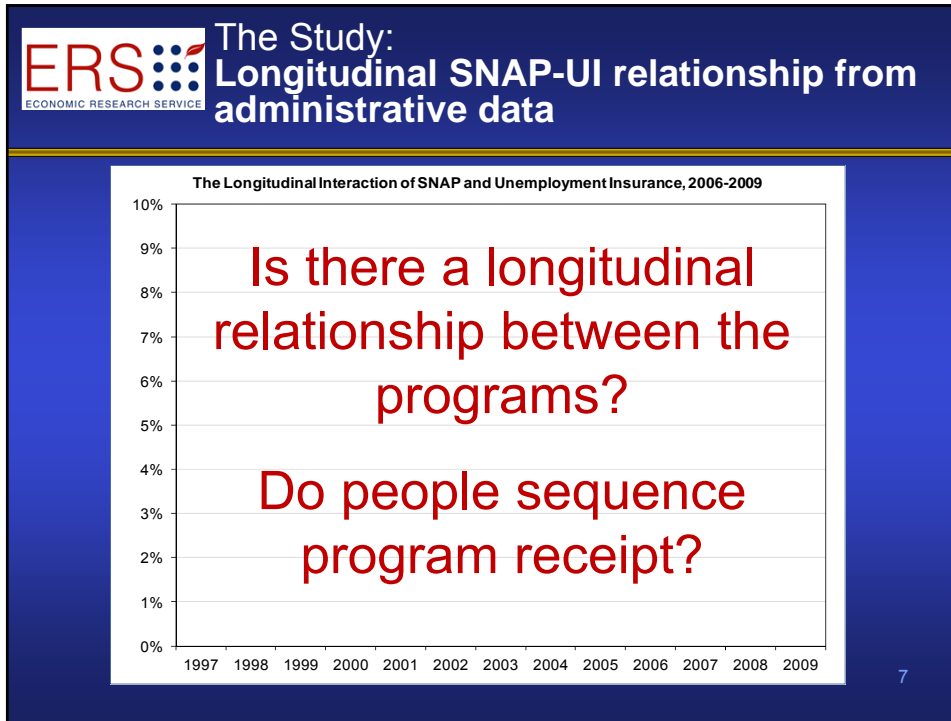
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
  - Formerly Food Stamps
  - SNAP asset rules have been relaxed since 2000
- Unemployment Insurance (UI)
  - Has been greatly expanded since mid-2008
    - Extended Benefits
    - Emergency Unemployment Compensation (EUC)
    - Up to 99 weeks of continuous receipt in states with high unemployment rates

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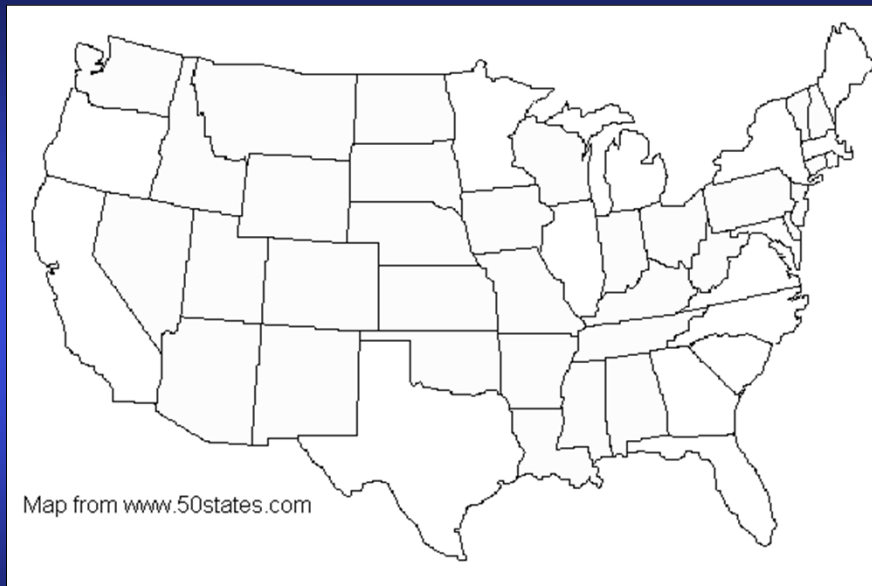
- ERS** ECONOMIC RESEARCH SERVICE
- The Study:  
**The Process**
- Study the intersection of SNAP and UI by merging administrative records for UI onto administrative records for SNAP at the state level
    - Years 2006 – 2009
  - Matching primarily through Social Security Numbers or other unique identifiers
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## The Study: Research Teams

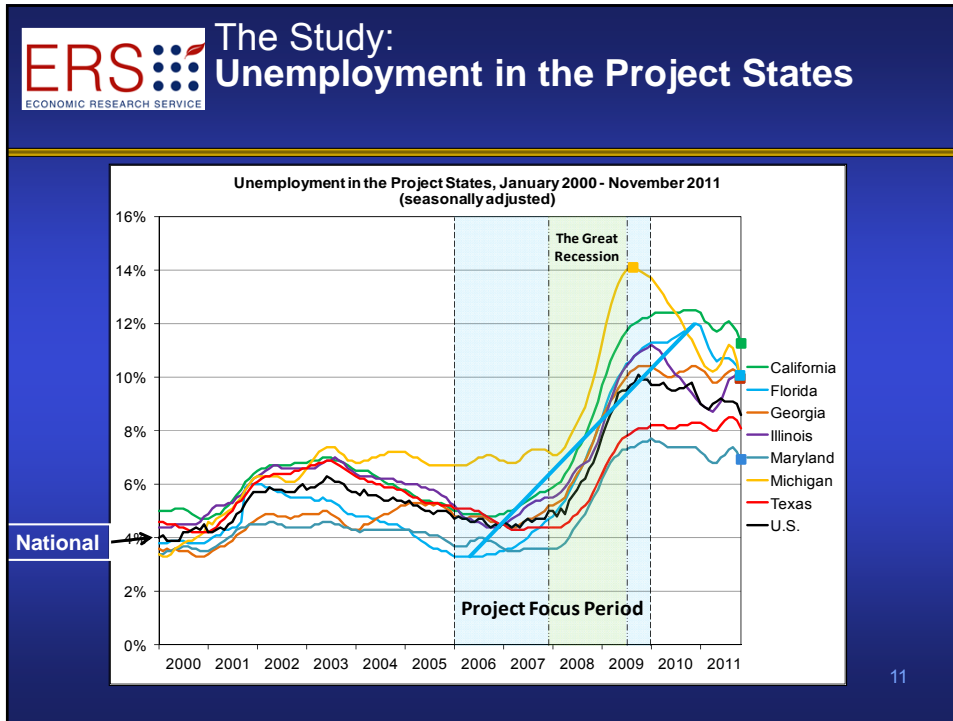
- |  |            |
|--|------------|
| 1) Public Policy Institute of California | California |
| 2) University of Missouri                | Florida    |
| 3) Jacob France Institute                | Maryland   |
| • Andrew Young School                    | Georgia    |
| • Chapin Hall Center                     | Illinois   |
| • Upjohn Institute                       | Michigan   |
| • Ray Marshall Center                    | Texas      |

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Map from [www.50states.com](http://www.50states.com)

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### The Three C's: Challenges to Merging Records from Administrative Data

**C**

- Custody
- Confidentiality
- Consistency

**C's**

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## The Three C's: Custody

- Custody
  - State agencies
  - The federal government only collects summary UI statistics (DOL) and samples of each state's monthly SNAP caseloads (FNS)
  - Changes in political administrations in the wake of the 2010 elections

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## The Three C's: Confidentiality

- Confidentiality
  - Use of SNAP data for “administration or enforcement” (2008 Farm Bill)
  - Release of UI data “to a public official for use in the performance of his or her official duties is permissible” or to their agent or contractor (20 C.F.R. § 603.5)
    - Official duties: “Administration or enforcement of law or the execution of the official responsibilities of a Federal, State, or local elected official”

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## The Three C's: Consistency

- Consistency
  - Internal
    - Across observations
    - Across time
  - Among different data sources
  - For ERS, consistency across research teams/states

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## The Study: Hypotheses

1. The low rate of concurrent SNAP-UI receipt understates the total connection between SNAP and UI benefits
2. Concurrent and sequential links between SNAP and UI grow during recessions
3. As the economy worsened, the lag between initiation of UI and SNAP take-up declined

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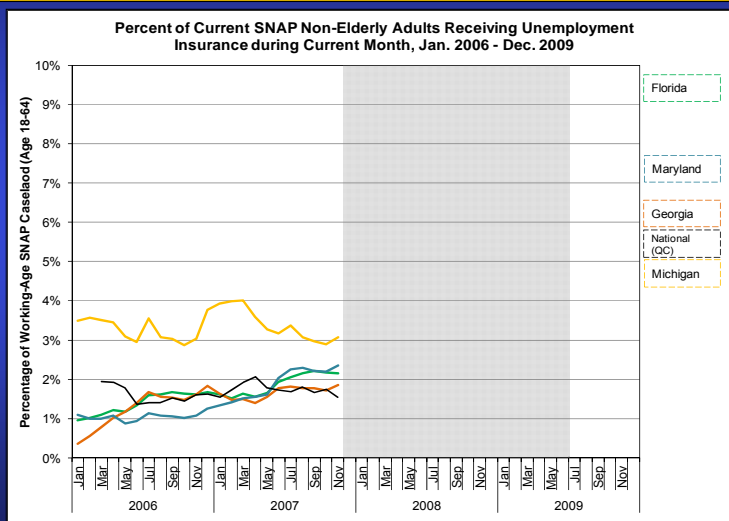


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**The Results:  
A Comparative View**

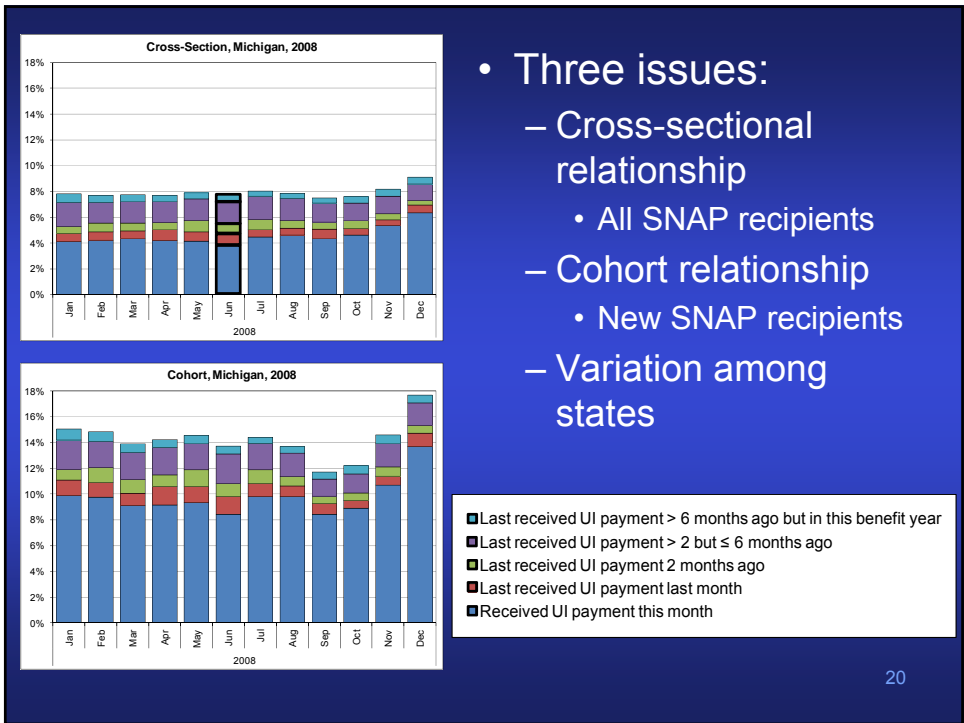
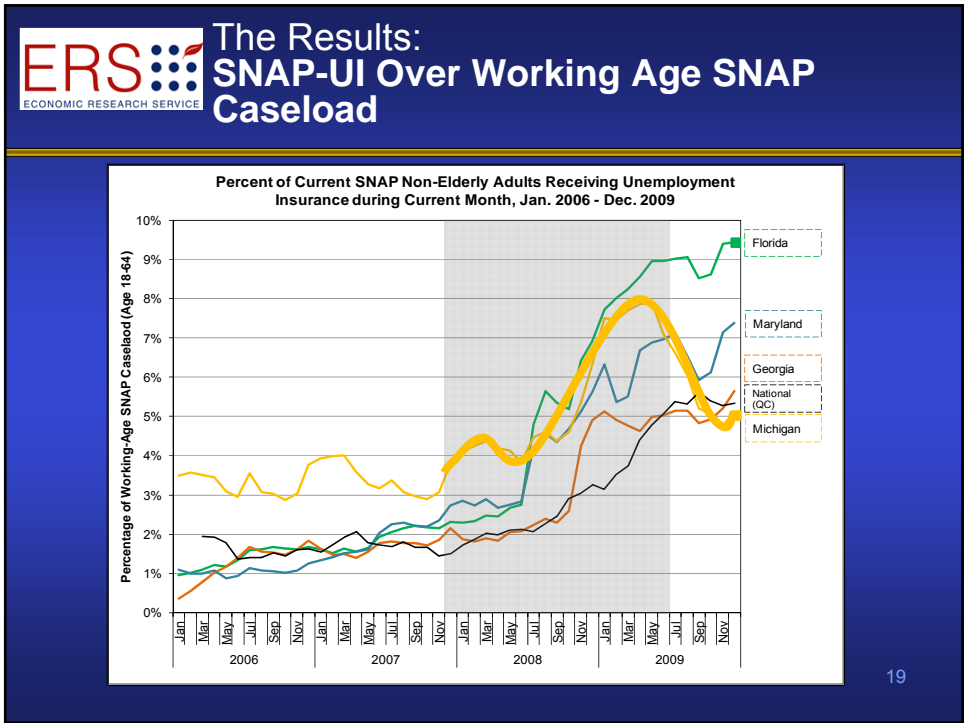
- Early comparison work is presented in the following slides.
- All results are preliminary and are subject to change.

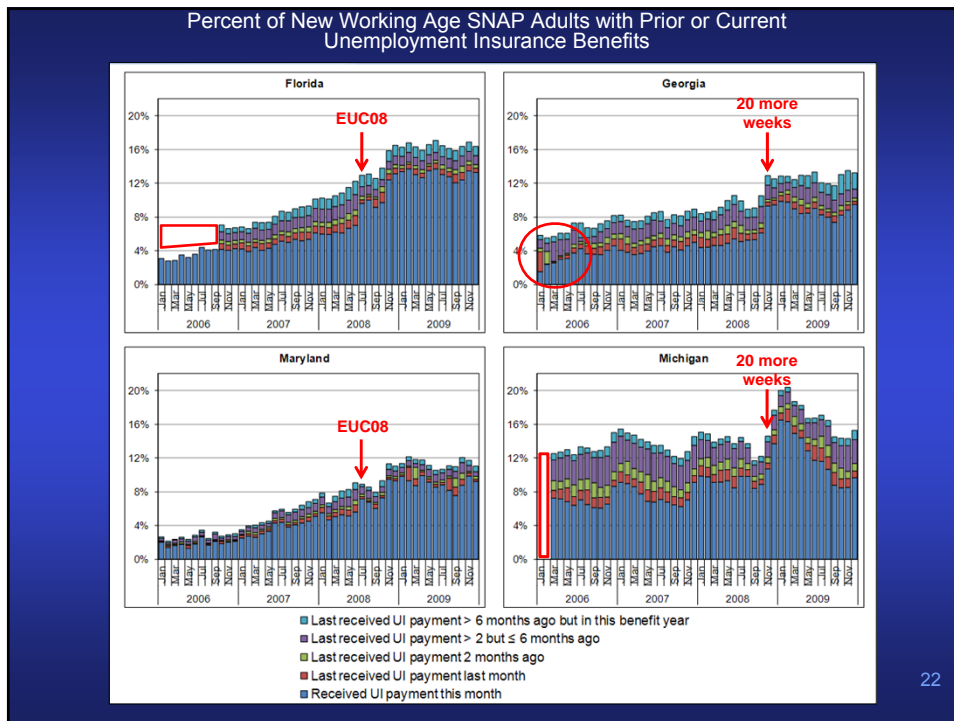
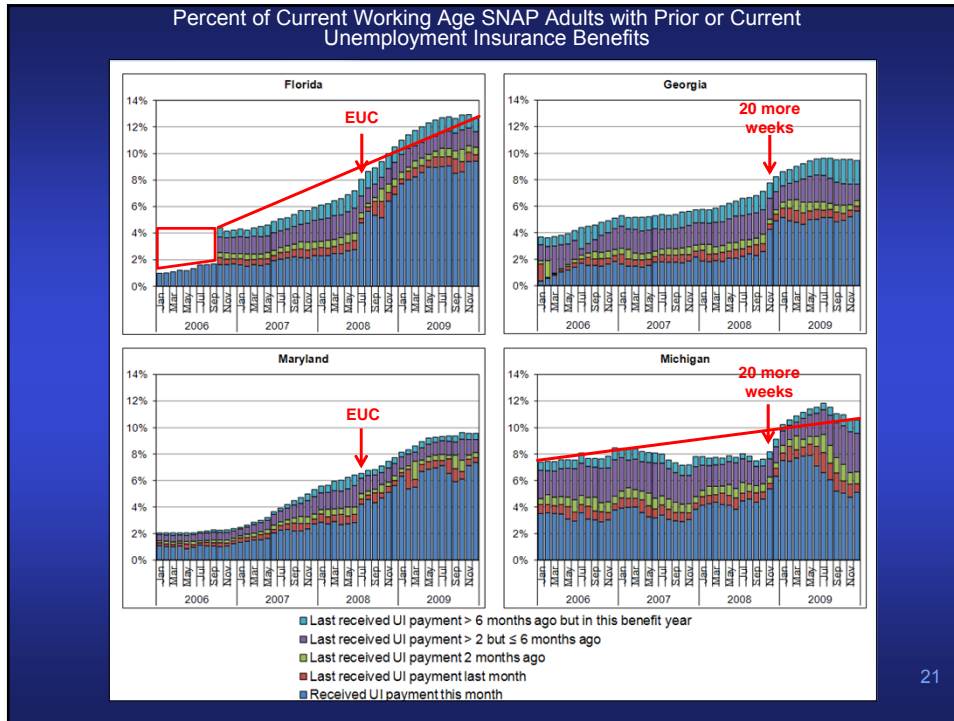
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**The Results:  
SNAP-UI Over Working Age SNAP  
Caseload**



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## The Study: Results

1. The low rate of concurrent SNAP-UI receipt understates the total connection between SNAP and UI benefits
  - Mostly confirmed
  - Sequenced receipt is 1/3 of the UI connection for all SNAP recipients and 1/5 of the UI connection for new SNAP recipients
    - Less than the 50 percent that was expected at the outset
2. Concurrent and sequential links between SNAP and UI grow during recessions
  - Confirmed
  - New working-age SNAP recipients have a stronger connection with UI than all working-age SNAP recipients
3. As the economy worsened, the lag between initiation of UI and SNAP take-up has declined
  - Still being explored

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## The Results: Implications

- Studies like this can inform important areas of program operations and policy:
  - Improve administration of safety net programs
    - Opportunities to target SNAP outreach efforts and coverage among eligible working poor
  - Improve policy analysis
    - Provide a better understanding of possible cross-program fiscal effects of extending UI benefits

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## The Study: Future Activities

### Upcoming Events

- SNAP-UI Data Linkage Project Partners' Meeting, March 5, 2012, Washington, DC  
– Open to the public

### Extensions

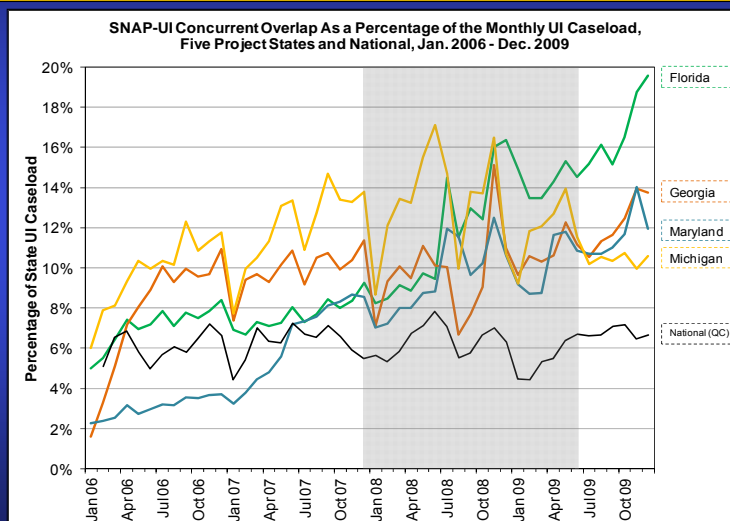
- Understanding patterns and differences among states
- Exploring changes in lag
- Modeling and advanced analysis techniques
- More recent data

*Thank you.*

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## The Results: SNAP-UI Over Monthly UI Caseload



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