Project Summary
Physical disabilities are increasing among working-age Americans. Disability and employment are related, but no research has examined whether changing labor force opportunities related to deindustrialization are driving increases in disability. I will use national demographic data to examine the relationship between labor force conditions and rising disability rates. In an era of unstable employment and declines of certain industries, are changes in work driving changes in disability? Rising disability among the working-age may have broad societal implications including rising unemployment and healthcare costs, and rising economic insecurity through job loss or unemployment may produce lower quality of life and wellbeing. This dissertation will address whether changes in work drive changes in disability, and considers the social policy implications and interventions of this work.

Results
I have made significant progress towards completing my project goals. First, I linked all necessary publicly available data files and created an analytical dataset. Once I receive the restricted data, my dataset will be complete and ready for analysis. Second, I participated in the UMN Writing Center's annual dissertation writing retreat and finished writing the background and motivation section for my dissertation project. Third, I applied for and was awarded the UMN Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship for the 2020-2021 academic year.

Future project plans
My goal is to complete the dissertation project by the end of the 2020-2021 academic year. The work completed during the period funded by the Consortium allowed me to create my analytic data file, finish writing the motivation section for my dissertation, and apply for a prestigious University fellowship. Because of Consortium funding, I now have the resources necessary to dedicate full time effort to completing my dissertation during the 2020-2021 academic year.