Reviewer’s report

Title: Nursing Home Characteristics Associated with Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) Burden and Transmission

Version: 2 Date: 11 June 2012

Reviewer: Terri Rebmann

Reviewer’s report:

Overall, this is a very strong manuscript about a very important issue. The subject of the study is well described and of high importance, the methods are strong, well described, and appropriate for this study, the results are well described, and the discussion is appropriate and thorough. A few potential issues to address:

The Methods section indicates that residents were allowed to opt out of the study (i.e., to be screened for MRSA). Please comment on the number or percentage of residents who opted out, and what (if anything) is known about the demographics of these individuals. It is important to attempt to assess if there are significant differences between those who were study subjects (i.e., screened) versus those who opted out (i.e., not screened). If a large number/percentage of residents opted out, that should be included in the discussion of study limitations as this could pose a strong bias to the study.

The demographics table (Table 1) is somewhat confusing. For variables that have multiple sub-categories, such as age, the data should be presented more thoroughly and consistently. For instance, age should be listed as:

Age
- # 65 yrs
- 66 – 84 yrs
- # 85 yrs

This should be done for residents’ race, also.

It would also be helpful to list the mean for each of the demographic variables either instead of, or in addition to, the median.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.
Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.