Reviewer's report

Title: Individual, facility, and program factors affecting retention in a national weight management program

Version: 2 Date: 16 December 2013

Reviewer: Mei-Wei Chang

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Major Compulsory Revisions
1. Page 7. Please clarify if the staffing as related to 10 common weight reduction strategies? If it did, how did it differ between smaller and greater program staffing?
2. Please discuss how the current findings help future research. Also, what possible recommendations for other community based or onsite programs to increase retention.
3. Conclusion is basically a summary of study finding.

Discretionary Revisions
1. Page 3, says “Analysis of 2007 VHA Move!…”, page 5: measurement of treatment retention says “outpatient data form 2008 and 2009. were the analysis done from the same data set (2007) or different data set. Were the 18,865 from 2007 or ??
2. Page 4. “individuals who are obese…. Or overweight…..” suggest to revise as “overweight … obese..
3. It will be helpful to readers, if the authors could provide more details on the intervention. For example, were the intervention delivered monthly or ? How often did the individual or group counseling take place, what was the reward system used.
4. Page 6 “conditions ( one , two, or # 3) suggest three instead of “3”
5. Page 6. No payment for MOVE! But copayment for other visit???? Why some service required payment or copayment? How did this related to participant characteristic or income?
6. Did the participants attend the MOVE! when they visited other services at VHA? If it did, would it be possible that individual with more comorbidity had a higher retention rate since they visited VA more often because when they visited VHA, they attended MOVE!
7. Page 11. What about the combination of program strategies? Did individual only allow applying one program strategy or multiple? If multiple was allowed, how did it affect the findings?
8. It is great to hear that VHA was making several changes to make MOVE! Better. Did the changes based on the findings? If not, what results they based on
to make changes? How would the findings help with VHA or other organizations?

9. Page 14, VHS may consider adopting a measure of retention as a performance or quality indicator. This implies program staffing is irrelevant to retention but staff performance did.

10. The current study showed that male participants were more likely dropped out than female participants which contradict to a prior research (Honas et al, 2003). Please explain?

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

None