Author's response to reviews

Title: Challenges in defining an optimal approach to formula-based allocations of public health funds in the United States

Authors:

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Ms. Makri:

Dr. Holtgrave and I were pleased to receive the reviewer's favorable comments regarding our manuscript entitled "Challenges in defining an optimal approach to formula-based allocations of public health funds" (MS: 1599977401208475, BioMed Central Public Health).

In response to the reviewer's recommendations, I have made the following changes to this manuscript:

Reviewer comment: "As this paper is based on discussion of public health funding allocations in the United States, it would be preferred that the title of the paper and the summary on page 14 state so explicitly."

Response: I have added "in the United States" to the title of the paper and to the first sentence of the Summary on page 14.

Reviewer comment: "Figure numbers in the legends on page 20 are not the same as those shown with the figures."

Response: I have double-checked the figure legends on page 20 with the image files for the figures. The images themselves do not have legends or figure numbers embedded within them, so there should now be no discordance between the figure legends on page 20 and the content of the images (files listed below).

Fig 1a_Buehler_Holtgrave_AIDS_Date_of_Report
Fig 1b_Buehler_Holtgrave_AIDS_Date_of_Diagnosis
Fig 2_Buehler_Holtgrave_Hypothetical
Fig 3_Buehler_Holtgrave_EP_per_capita

Reviewer comment: "It would be easier for the reader to understand the purpose of Figure 2 for a hypothetical disease if the legend could be expanded to indicate the intended use of the trends shown for the two states."

Response: I have added the following sentence to the legend for Figure 2: "These data are to be used in a formula calculation to allocate public health program funds between States A and B beginning in January 2007."

In addition, I have made the following additional changes:
In references to the Ryan White HIV CARE program (original page 6 and page 8), the abbreviation "HRSA" for Health Resources Services Administration was not defined in the original text. Given the option of either defining this abbreviation or dropping its use, I took the latter option.

On page 7, in describing tuberculosis trends, I added "in the United States" to the example of how cuts in funding for successful programs can lead to disease resurgence.

Since submitting the paper, the article cited in Reference #2 has been published in the *Journal of Public Health Management and Practice*, and I have added the full citation for this paper, including an open-access URL address for the paper.

I have made a few minor wording changes for the sake of style, but none of these substantially affect the meaning of the text.

Thank you again for your interest in our manuscript.

Sincerely,

James W. Buehler, MD