Reviewer's report

Title: Cost and Surgical Impact of Telephonic Care Support of Populations at Risk for Musculoskeletal Preference-Sensitive Surgeries in a Randomized Quality Study of Interactive Voice Response with a Transfer to Health Coaching

Version: 2 Date: 15 October 2012

Reviewer: Jon Lurie

Reviewer's report:

This is an interesting report of a interactive Voice Response system used to improve the uptake of health coaching compared to mailings. The study is of interest. The authors in several places report that there was a statistically significant reduction in overall medical costs which is not correct, there was a trend toward reduced overall medical costs (p=0.055); there was a significant reduction in the somewhat idiosyncratic measure of "actionable costs". The need for specificity regarding statistical significance and not overselling the findings is made more poignant by the financial conflict of interest of the sponsor and at least 1 author. Similarly, the statement "direct telephonic communication with a health coach is highly scalable and effective mechanism to support shared decision making", besides including the necessary "a" should either be supported by data or reworded to make it more clearly a mere opinion/belief of the authors.

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

I have served as a paid consultant for the Foundation for Informed Medical Decision Making