Reviewer’s report

Title: Reorienting Programme Budgeting and Marginal Analysis (PBMA) towards disinvestment

Version: 2 Date: 25 August 2010

Reviewer: Adam Elshaug

Reviewer’s report:

The author is to be congratulated for his considerable attention to reviewer comments and for refining this paper in a manner that, in this reviewers opinion, further improves on what was a very well conceived and written piece. I offer the following minor comments.

Minor Essential revisions:

Mid page 5: Please clarify this sentence (? remove ‘to’ ?): "After piloting PBMA to in Hull PCT’s diabetes programme..."

Page 10: "...they also recognised that the failure to also nominate spokespeople for contraction: advocates against investment and for disinvestment, may have further “biased the process against disinvestment”. For clarity suggest adding "i.e." after colon (after "contraction:", before "advocates").

Discretionary Revisions:

1. There is a small degree of inconsistency in the presentation of direct quotes. Some appear in text, with inverted commas but not italicised. Some appear as separate, indented paragraphs in italics. Length of quote might generally differentiate the two styles but this does not appear standard throughout the document. Personally I like the indent/italics style for quotes over two lines but perhaps the author should consult BMC HSR instructions and/or standardise the presentation of quotes throughout the document.

Congratulations on a fine article!

Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest 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:

Dr. Elshaug is a chief investigator on an Australian National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Project Grant (565327) which focuses on
disinvestment. Dr. Elshaug holds a 2010-11 Harkness Fellowship (The Commonwealth Fund) and is focusing on comparative effectiveness research (CER) in the USA (and broader) context as it might apply to disinvestment. Dr. Elshaug is an Affiliate of The University of Adelaide-based Adelaide Health Technology Assessment (AHTA), which is contracted to complete evaluations of health technologies. Dr Elshaug sits on a panel of experts for the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing MBS Quality Framework. Dr. Elshaug has and continues to collaborate with and advise government bodies in Canada and Spain on disinvestment.