Reviewer’s report

Title: Factors affecting the use of patient survey data for quality improvement in the Veterans Health Administration

Version: 1 Date: 19 March 2011

Reviewer: Edward Post

Reviewer’s report:

Major Compulsory Revisions: none.

Minor Essential Revisions: 1) please explain how and why only 16 of the 24 potential respondents were chosen; 2) see clerical notes below.

Discretionary Revisions: 1) consider offering a few of the organizational and practice characteristics of the two facilities for descriptive purposes, in a manner that would not uniquely identify them; 2) please review under ‘Persistence of quality improvement staff’, whether the second respondent quotation has the correct facility—it would seem to follow that this is from Facility 2 instead, from the content of the prior paragraph; 3) consider discussing or contrasting the domains of potential promoters and barriers with respect to the tenets of major QI models—e.g., using the language of the Toyota Production System, it would appear that both facilities undertake QI (Continuous Improvement), but there appears to be less consistent language implying empowerment (Respect for People) across the facilities.

Clerical issues: 1) comma missing on cover page after author Charns; 2) spaces missing after close brackets page 3 lines 4 and 6; 3) citation 22 in alternate format page 9; 4) VHA not accompanied by a full antecedent of the acronym page 12; 5) sceptical noted to be UK form page 15; 6) citation 25 first author mismatch with reference list page 20; 7) author initials not entirely standardized for each person on page 22; 8) blank line missing between references 23 and 24 on page 24.

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 am employed by the US Department of Veterans Affairs.