Reviewer's report

Title: Addressing Conflicts of Interest in Public Private Partnerships

Version: 1 Date: 6 February 2010

Reviewer: Joel Lexchin

Reviewer's report:

This article looks at how different public-private partnerships deal with conflicts-of-interest (COI) and what different organizations can learn from each other. While potentially useful there are significant problems with the manuscript in its present form.

Major compulsory revisions:

1. There are two ways to try and deal with COI, to manage it or to eliminate it as much as possible. For the most part the authors have focused on managing COI rather than trying to eliminate it and they need to justify why they have chosen that position.

2. Furthermore, the authors appear to be defining COI rather narrowly to refer to instances where individuals may have conflicts arising from situations where there is a direct COI, e.g., a financial benefit that may accrue to someone. A broader definition of COI would be that individuals have conflicts based on an ongoing relationship with organizations regardless of specific situations or decisions that are being considered.

3. There is nothing about the methodology employed in this article. Why did the authors choose the PPPs that they did, how did they choose the key points in the policies to focus on, how was data extracted from the policies.

Minor essential revisions:

Page 2:

Explain what is meant by the term “good governance”.

Page 2:

How are board members to be selected? Are board members themselves subject to searches for any potential COIs?

Page 3:

It’s not clear to me what makes the policies of PATH “broad” and “complete”.

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:
I declare that I have no competing interests