Reviewer's report

Title: Managing the Effects of Health Worker Outmigration: A Study of Philippine Policy Responses to Nurse Brain Drain

Version: 1 Date: 30 July 2012

Reviewer: Patricia Pittman

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Major Essential Revisions

1) Each of the policy mechanisms were interesting, but their treatment was so superficial that this reviewer was left hanging in search of more information. For example: Is the HRHN network a formal organization? Who funds it? What do they mean by ‘investors’? How many of them are there? What are they proposing? How has it changed over time? Were they the ones who proposed the NARS and EntreNurse? Have these programs been successful? How many unemployed nurses are benefitting? What health outcomes do these programs aim to address? Is it replicable in other countries with nurse surpluses?

2) Should the authors wish to make a major revision, they should identify a policy relevant point of reference that will help them tell a story. Examples might include assessing the impact of the WHO Code of Practice on social discourse in the Philippines, analyzing historical changes (e.g., now versus 10 years ago), or national differences (e.g., Philippines versus another country), or a sectorial comparison (e.g., government versus staff nurses). Any of these analytic references would give meaning to the findings. As a stand alone set of findings, they simply are not interesting. Frankly, the professionalization of nursing is happening around the world, and the emergence of programs that promote brain gain and ethical recruitment are also occurring in many countries. What is the “news” here? I have no doubt that there is an interesting angle that could be pursued; the authors simply need to find one.

MINOR: FYI, the reference to US laws (14) is outdated. Most Philippine RNs enter with greencards, although currently there is visa retrogression

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

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 I have no competing interests