Reviewer's report

Title: Physicians in private practice: reasons for being a social franchise member

Version: 4 Date: 24 May 2012

Reviewer: Sangeeta Mookherji

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. Please check the whole document for typos (including the title!) and incorrect grammar and punctuation, more than likely resulting from the rapid turnaround in responding to the first round of comments.

Discretionary Revisions

1. Re. the recruitment targeting of older physicians (last sentence in para 1 of Sampling Characteristics), the authors may want to consider defusing reactions of "selection bias!" by acknowledging this threat to validity, and perhaps including as a line in the discussion/interpretation of the significant increases in volume and income - maybe the results of this study apply if franchise members start off with a good reputation and an established practice - that has implications for how the results contribute to the conceptualization of a franchise business model.

2. The first sentence of the last para of the article could be re-phrased to be clearer - the worry is that utilization/client volume goes up for non-franchised/non-capitated services because client satisfaction goes up, and clients end up using the SQH GP for everything, even if it is not price controlled. The assumption of increasing OOPP is that clients are either using services they were not before, or paying more for services they were using already from the SQH GP than they were before - but, there isn't data on OOPP from the clients, just on the fees paid to the SQH providers, so we don't know which is true. So, the issue is that out-of-pocket payments for health services are likely to increase for SQH clients, as they gain trust in their GP and begin to use services that are not capitated - and the business model needs to address this, using some set of the things already listed later in the para.

3. Consider replacing "birth spacing" with "family planning".

Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest in its field

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.
Declaration of competing interests:

I declare I have no competing interests