Reviewer’s report

Title: Dual use of VA and non-VA hospitals by veterans with multiple hospitalizations

Version: 2  Date: 21 October 2014

Reviewer: Evelyn Chang

Reviewer’s report:

This is an important topic, and I applaud the authors for finding the data sources to describe this population.

Discretionary Revisions:
* In the first paragraph line 85, suggest transition to sentence beginning "greater reliance on VA care." Otherwise confusing to think about reliance and priority.
* Is "priority" a Veteran Benefit Administration term? Reliance seems to be a more intuitive concept for researchers, whereas I was confused with the term "priority"... priority for whom and why?

Minor Essential Revisions
* Second paragraph line 95. Please describe prevalence of "dual users" and offer citation.
* Results/discussion is repetitive. Would recommend cutting down on this section by 15-20%.
* Limitations (lines 309-310): not sure where the data is for the statement that "dual users in this study were much less likely than other patients to have their non-VA hospitalizations by insurance." The bucket for "all other payers" also includes other forms of insurance, self-pay, charity, or no insurance, so one cannot make this assumption.
* Last line of discussion paragraph (lines 349-350) seems to be a stretch. This paper is not about how intensive care coordination reduces number of hospitalizations (nor is this consistent even in randomized trials).

Major Compulsory Revisions
* Introduction: would recommend emphasizing why it important to focus on "dual users." why is this paper significant? Especially given the access problems that the VA is facing?
* Recommend increasing the paragraph on significance and implications of these findings. Any clinical and policy implications? What are implications for the VA? Are there any implications for ACOs?

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field
Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests