Reviewer's report

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

Version: 3  Date: 23 January 2015

Reviewer: Evelyn Chang

Reviewer's report:

The authors have addressed all of the points in the previous round. As a result, the writing is more clear and precise, and it is generally easier to read. I appreciated their limitations section, particularly on their definition of "dual use." Multinomial logistic can be overwhelming to interpret, but authors did a great job explaining it in the manuscript.

Discretionary Revisions: None

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

1. I am still not clear on what "All Other Payers" means. It would help to define it in the methods section of the manuscript or add a footnote to Table 3.

2. In the results summary (p 13, line 311), I am not sure how they define how dual users appear to be sicker. According to the tables, those who were admitted to VA hospitals only had more physical comorbidities by Elixhauser diagnoses.

Major Compulsory Revisions (which the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

3. This manuscript seems to have a sparse Discussion section aside from the Limitations. I'm not getting a sense for how their findings support or refute their hypotheses. I would like to challenge authors to think about the reasons for and implications of their findings. I appreciate how they embedded possible explanations for greater preference for VA mental health care (p. 13 line 308-309). I understand the need for care coordination between health care systems. But can the authors explain their findings related to age, principal diagnoses, residence, and payers?

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 declare that I have no competing interests.