Reviewer’s report

Title: Mapping the Reach of a Rural Transitions Nurse Program for Veterans with Geographic Information Systems

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Reviewer: Samantha Dolan

Reviewer's report:

Although this article is well written and describes an interesting and somewhat low-maintenance system for facilitating quality improvement projects at the VA, the authors should consider heavily revising the structure of the manuscript. Essentially, they are presenting the findings of a qualitative study on a prototype of an information system, however, the description of the intervention (GIS Maps), the evaluation methods, and results are all missing key pieces of information making it difficult for the reader to understand what exactly is being evaluated (is it the technology or user perceptions or both?) and how the evaluation was completed. The authors explain that RE-AIM was used as the framework to guide the larger project implementation, however, they do not seem to have used a framework to guide the evaluation conducted and presented in the manuscript. Additionally, the STROBE reporting guidelines were used which are not the most appropriate set of guidelines to follow for this type of study, this is not an observational epidemiological study. The COREQ reporting standards for qualitative studies would be more appropriate.

Specific comments:

- The second and third paragraphs of the Introduction would fit more appropriately in the Methods section as they are providing information on what contributed to the development of the intervention. The Introduction is missing background information on the context of the problem that is being addressed by the TNP (geography as a barrier to care) and what has previously been accomplished in this area/field.

- Page 4, line 22- this can be said for many types of information systems; would be more helpful to present how information systems have been used in other settings to address similar barriers to those facing the TNP.

- Page 5, line 22- Exclusion of TNP enrollees with missing addresses is a huge limitation to the effectiveness of the GIS maps, this should be mentioned in the Discussion.

- Page 5, line 24- More information needs to be included on how stakeholders were selected, including sample size determination, whether interviews were completed over the phone or in-person, how/whom conducted the content analysis, how many presentations were conducted, etc. Also, more information is needed on how stakeholders
were introduced to the maps, whether they were trained on how to use the maps. How were stakeholders sensitized to the maps?

What software was used to calculate descriptive statistics?

Need to explain why this site was excluded.

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