

Reviewer's report

Title: Implementing Effective Educational Interventions in Complex Mental Health Systems

Version: 1 **Date:** 10 August 2007

Reviewer: Bruce Rollman

Reviewer's report:

General:

Interesting, detailed, and well-written manuscript describing how two educational interventions were implemented across a geographically dispersed VA VISN network of care involving .

Major Compulsory Revisions:

The authors describe how their first program, training in group therapy techniques, was unsuccessful at achieving successful translation into routine care while their second program, training in psychosocial rehabilitation skills was "very successful." Unfortunately, they do not provide any data to support either statement. How were the metrics of successful patient outcomes defined? Examples could be quality of life, symptom burden, health care utilization, and health care costs. Please clarify.

What were the implementation goals used by the study facilities (p. 8, last sentence para 1)?

The authors are to be applauded for their paucity in citing the medical literature. Indeed, they cite just 13 relatively recent references. Yet, many of their findings are consistent with Wagner's six-step Chronic Illness model (e.g., leadership, decision support, delivery system redesign, etc.) that they seem to have overlooked. Is this an oversight?

Discussion. Do the authors care to speculate on what aspects of their intervention were most essential to their success? Does their approach have any limitations? Do they have any estimates on the costs and/or FTE effort required to implement their successful program compared to their less successful one?

The manuscript devotes considerable space to describing "lessons learned" for how to implement an educational intervention and it includes a helpful Lessons Learned table summarizing these lessons (Table 1). However, as presented, the table is too detailed. Perhaps its clarity may be enhanced by focusing on lessons learned/advice for readers interested in implementing their own educational interventions and deleting the columns on the group therapy and psychosocial interventions?

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.