

Table of Contents to Harvard University Measurement Letter of October 9, 2012

A. Patterns by Which Relative Differences in Favorable and Adverse Outcomes Tend to be Systematically Affected by the Overall Prevalence of an Outcome and Implications of the Failure to Recognize Those Patterns 4

B. Patterns by Which Absolute Differences between Rates and Differences Measured by Odds Ratios Tend to be Systematically Affected by the Overall Prevalence of an Outcome and Implications of the Failure to Recognize Those Patterns 19

C. Implications of the Patterns by Which Relative and Absolute Differences Tend to be Affected by the Prevalence of an Outcome with Respect to Pay-for-Performance Programs in Massachusetts and Elsewhere22

D. The Fallacy of Notions That Choice of Disparities Measure Involves a Value Judgment or That Two Measure Yielding Different Conclusions About the Strength of the Forces Causing a Disparity are Both Valid (and Discussion of a Theoretically Sound Method of Appraising the Strength of Those Forces Reflected by a Pair of Rates) 25

E. The Disarray in Health Disparities Research Generally and at Harvard and the Questionable Value of All Such Research Undertaken without Regard to the Patterns by Which Standard Measures of Differences Between Outcome Rates Tend to be Affected by the Prevalence of an Outcome 30

 1. Health Disparities Measurement Generally 30

 2. Health Disparities Measurement at Harvard 33

 a. Health Care Policy Department of Harvard Medical School 33

 b. Harvard School of Public Health 39

 c. The Commissioned Paper: Healthcare Disparities Measurement 43

F. Generally Reviewing the Measurement of Demographic Differences at Harvard 44