*Epidemiology*

re: “Wildfire exposure and healthcare use among people who use durable medical

equipment in Southern California”

Dear Dr. Lash,

Individuals relying on electricity-dependent medical equipment (DME) are likely particularly vulnerable to both wildfire smoke exposure and health effects from evacuation. Prior studies, many in *Epidemiology*, have examined the association between wildfire PM2.5 and emergency department use and hospitalizations, primarily using claims data. However, none have evaluated smoke exposure among DME users or the health implications of residential proximity wildfire, including evacuations.

We quantified the effects of wildfire PM2.5 on outpatient, inpatient, and emergency visit rates among Kaiser Permanente DME users in Southern California using electronic health record data. We find outpatient visits decreased by 1-13% for a week after a 10 increase in wildfire PM2.5. We also identified patients living nearby and in the evacuation zones of two major wildfires, and with a difference-in-differences design find a decrease in outpatient visits, and an increase in inpatient admissions, during the larger of the two fires.

Other studies have documented increases in emergency and inpatient healthcare use but wildfire smoke and evacuations may interrupt outpatient care in this vulnerable population.

The manuscript and data have not been previously published, either in whole or in part, and no similar paper is in press or under review elsewhere. We have no conflicts of interest or closely related papers.

Sincerely,

Heather McBrien, Sebastian Rowland, Tarik Benmarhnia, Sara Tartof, and Joan Casey