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PINNACLEHEALTH
System

April 24, 2002

Marc P. Volavka
Executive Director
Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council
225 Market Street
Suite 400
Harrisburg, PA 17101

Dear Mr. Volavka:

The PinnacleHealth System acknowledges the efforts of the Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council to provide timely and useful information to Pennsylvania citizens. The most recent report suggests that the risk of dying after coronary artery bypass graft (CABG) surgery performed at the PinnacleHealth System in the calendar year 2000 was higher than statistically expected.

PinnacleHealth System is the third largest provider of CABG surgery in Pennsylvania. PinnacleHealth System constantly monitors the quality of care provided to our patients and has numerous programs in place to ensure that quality care is provided. As part of this commitment, PinnacleHealth System maintains a comprehensive database on all patients undergoing heart surgery at our facilities. We participate in the Society of Thoracic Surgeons national data collection and analysis system; the largest database of CABG surgery in the world. The Society of Thoracic Surgeons risk prediction model is widely acknowledged as valid and reproducible.

For the calendar year 2000, the observed risk of dying within 30 days of having CABG surgery at PinnacleHealth System falls well within the expected range as predicted by the Society of Thoracic Surgeons risk model. Incidentally, this is also true for the calendar years 1998, 1999, and 2001.

PinnacleHealth System is committed to providing high quality cardiac surgery to the citizens of Pennsylvania. We will continue to strive to improve; we take very seriously the responsibility to monitor and measure our results using the most statistically valid methods available to us.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the information included in your report.

Sincerely,

Roger Longenderfer, M.D.
President and CEO