



**THE WESTERN
PENNSYLVANIA HOSPITAL**

WEST PENN ALLEGHENY HEALTH SYSTEM

4800 FRIENDSHIP AVENUE, PITTSBURGH, PA 15224

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February 27, 2004

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

Dear Mr. Volavka:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the *Guide to Coronary Artery Bypass Graft Surgery – 2002 Data*. The Western Pennsylvania Hospital appreciates the Council's work to provide hospitals with information that can be used to augment ongoing performance improvement processes.

The Western Pennsylvania Hospital maintains an active Performance Improvement program in which the Hospital, its physicians and staff work collaboratively to continuously evaluate the care delivered to our patients. The data collected by PHC4 is an integral component in this review process, along with national data that is used to benchmark our performance.

In the two years since readmission data became part of the report, members of our performance improvement team, as well as physicians and staff within the Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery, have studied the data and worked together to use the information to develop and implement strategies to lower the number of readmissions. We are pleased to report that strides have been made in that area. However, access to additional information is needed to accurately evaluate the potential relationship between post-surgical outcomes and readmission.

In closing, we reiterate West Penn Hospital's commitment to providing the highest quality of care possible and offer our continued support to the Council's efforts to assist us in meeting this goal.

Sincerely,

James M. Collins
President and Chief Executive Officer

Michael Culig, MD
Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery