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PINNACLEHEALTH

February 28, 2005

Mr. 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 respond to your "CABG 2003 Performance Report." Pinnacle Health System recognizes the importance and value of PHC4 and supports the intent of the Council in publishing this information.

PinnacleHealth is dedicated to providing quality cardiovascular care to our community. The Cardiovascular Surgery program performs a careful review of each mortality following a catheterization, intervention, or open-heart procedure. All of the mortalities reported have been carefully reviewed and no quality issues were identified.

A variety of risk-adjustment methodologies are used in health care to provide a basis for comparison, with no consensus among organizations regarding the best way to perform this risk adjustment. To this end, we believe the PHC4 methodology may not accurately capture subtle differences in patient status that impact mortality.

A number of system improvements have been made and continue to be made based on our cardiovascular department QA/PI program. A multi-disciplinary approach with an emphasis on teamwork is the foundation for improving each aspect of our program.

Again, we thank you for the opportunity to comment on the information included in your latest report.

Sincerely,

Roger Longenderfer, M.D.
President and Chief Executive Officer

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