



February 8, 2006

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

Dear Mr. Volavka:

Subject: *PHC4's 2004 CABG Report*

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the 2004 PHC4 CABG Report that is soon to be released. Our concern in this letter is twofold: the 30-day post-surgical mortality ratio and the criteria used to define inclusion of cases in the CABG report.

We have consulted the "Technical Notes" for the outcome measures reported and believe that the published report should clearly indicate that "cause of death" is not considered in this analysis.

Having reviewed all of our coronary bypass cases for 2004, we find discrepancies in types of procedures included (i.e. CABG, CABG with valve rings, CABG with ventricular aneurysmectomy) and, specifically, three cases that were emergent life-saving attempts. Inclusion of these cases as standard CABG procedures has resulted in an overstatement of our 30-day post-surgical mortality.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Thomas Helling, MD
Chairman, Department of Surgery

Savas Mavridis, MD
Cardiothoracic Surgeon

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