

February 6, 2006

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

Dear Mr. Volavka:

On behalf of Pennsylvania Hospital, we would like to thank you for the opportunity to comment on the 2004 CABG Report. We appreciate the time and effort involved in reporting information related to cost and outcomes of healthcare in Pennsylvania. After careful review of the report, we would like to provide these additional observations.

We would like to point out the limitations of the 30-day post-surgical mortality analysis included in the report. Thirty-nine percent of the patients who had CABG surgery at Pennsylvania Hospital during 2004 were from out of state. These patients were not included in the analysis based upon unavailable post-discharge information. Since all of our in hospital mortalities happened to occur in Pennsylvania residents this artificially elevated the 30-day post-surgical mortality. Had one or more of these patients been from out of state (87% chance based on random probability), or had the out of state residents been included, our 30-day post-surgical mortality would have been within the accepted range. This type of analysis with a high percentage of missing data appears statistically flawed, leading to the (inappropriate) conclusion that our rate was higher than expected. We would encourage the council to exclude surgeons and hospitals that have significant portions of the patients in the denominator lost to follow-up due to out of state residence and lack of data. We believe the in-hospital mortality rating is a more valid outcome measure. The issue of incomplete follow-up information that is applicable to the 30-day mortality analysis also applies to the 7-day and 30-day readmission data since only Pennsylvania state residents are included. We would suggest the same exclusions should be implemented for these outcome measures.

We continuously review the quality of patient care at Pennsylvania Hospital for improvement opportunities. Thank you for the inclusion of this information with the published report.

Sincerely,



Timothy O. Morgan
Executive Director