

# Louis E. Samuels, MD, FACS

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Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council 2005

RE: PHC4 guide to coronary bypass graft surgery

To Whom It May Concern:

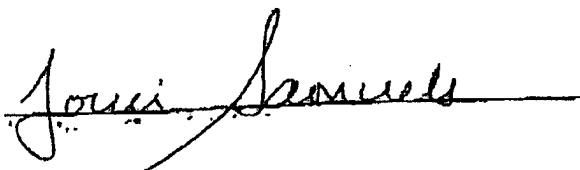
We are in receipt of the Pennsylvania Cost Containment PHC4 2005 coronary bypass grafting and open heart surgery report. We wish to offer the following comments to explain information that we do believe to be misleading in this report. While we generally commend PHC4 for its role in providing important and useful information to health care consumers, we also must express our concern about the misleading impression that can be created when the full factual picture is not presented in some detail. We refer specifically to the misleading total 30-day post surgical mortality analysis for Arthur T. Martella, M.D. This indicates a rating higher than expected for mortality. We strongly believe that this analysis by virtue of its value to consider important facts related to some cases, unfairly reflects on the surgeon who consistently renders cardiac surgery to all patients whether they are severely compromised or not. As an initial matter, Dr. Martella frequently operates on high risk and occasionally complex patients whom other surgeons may decline. Some of these patients have an expected mortality much higher than that reflected on the scale used by PHC4. As an example, one of Dr. Martella's patients was taken to the operating room following an unusual and catastrophic complication following placement of a coronary artery stent. The patient's likelihood of survival was very limited at this point, but unfortunately, the artery could not be opened by any means in the cardiac catheterization laboratory. Although she was very sick, an effort was given to the patient and the family to provide some hope. She underwent emergency coronary

artery bypass grafting surgery, but unfortunately succumbed to her complications of this event a few days later.

Dr. Martella, as the Medical Director at Paoli Hospital, works again, primarily at Paoli Hospital. Of note, Paoli Hospital results are very good. He is, however, on occasion, asked to provide support at other hospitals. Unfortunately, these patient's are frequently the sickest patients who cannot wait for a major, more elective procedure. During his coverage, only a few additional procedures were performed at other hospitals, but unfortunately, because of their critical nature, have reflected poorly in his overall results. One of these patients was undergoing coronary stenting and had an unfortunate complication of a dissection of the coronary artery. This also resulted in acute occlusion of the artery during attempt by the cardiologist to repair this problem, the coronary artery was perforated. Requiring emergency coronary artery bypass grafting surgery. He also, unfortunately, had received an excessive amount of blood-thinning agents prior to his surgery which led to severe complications postoperatively and ultimately, again, his demise.

In summary, Dr. Martella's overall and specific results at Paoli Hospital remain quite good. His commitment to providing coverage to all patients, even the most severely ill patients has resulted in a higher than expected mortality overall. Clearly looking at his overall numbers of cases, it is apparent that his commitment to providing coverage at other hospitals and particularly to very sick patients, has contributed to this. Paoli Hospital is proud to have Dr. Martella's skill in such a vital area and offers this letter as a statement of continued support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Louis Samuels", written over a horizontal line.