



**ALLEGHENY
GENERAL HOSPITAL**

WEST PENN ALLEGHENY HEALTH SYSTEM

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August 21, 2008

David H. Wilderman, Acting Executive Director
Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council
225 Market St., Suite 400
Harrisburg, PA 17101

Dear Mr. Wilderman,

Allegheny General Hospital would like to thank the Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council for the invitation to review and comment on the results of the calendar year 2005 / 2006 report on coronary artery bypass and cardiac valve surgery. The Department of Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery has a long-standing and close working relationship with the Allegheny Clinical Effectiveness group in the preparation and analysis of outcomes data for support of all process improvement initiatives, including the PHC4 Open Heart Project.

As active participants in regional and national outcomes projects, including the STS National Database and The Leapfrog Group, we support the efforts of the PHC4 to inform and educate the public on issues affecting healthcare delivery. We urge the Council to consider refining the current process to reflect the well established differences in the risks for each type of valve procedure. This additional information would be invaluable to the public.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on this important, ongoing process and remain committed to working with the Council, as we have in the past.

Sincerely,

George J. Magovern, Jr. M.D.
Chair, Department of Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery

Sharon Kiely, M.D.
Medical Director of Quality and Patient Safety

Connie M. Cibrone
President and Chief Executive Officer

cc: Dan Laurent, Director of System Media Relations
Kathleen Simpson, Academic Specialist, Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery
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