



1800 Mulberry Street
Scranton, Pennsylvania 18510
570 969-8000

August 20, 2008

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

Dear Mr. Wilderman:

Community Medical Center would like to thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council's (PHC4) *Cardiac Surgery in Pennsylvania Report*, 2005-2006 Data. We recognize and appreciate the extensive work and effort that PHC4 is doing to improve patient care outcomes in the state of Pennsylvania.

Since the inception of the Cardiac Surgery program at CMC, we have focused on patient outcomes in an iterative process of performance improvement utilizing a database that we essentially created. Using this ongoing process, we have significantly decreased our donor exposures per patient, improved our glucose control and focused on renal and neurological protection. These efforts have resulted in better than expected mortality rates across all cardiac surgical procedures.

Given the aging population in our county, a significant challenge for the Cardiac Surgery team has been avoiding readmissions. Working with our primary care physicians, our cardiologists and Emergency Department physicians and through a concerted effort of our surgeons, we have been able to identify patients who are most likely to be readmitted. Using available resources, we closely monitor these patients and identify problems that can be addressed early and in the outpatient setting. We have done this without the benefit of our own home health agency or transitional care unit and have not increased our length of stay or average charges.

Community Medical Center is proud of our Cardiac Surgery outcomes and is committed to providing the highest quality care to all our patients.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Nilsson', written over a horizontal line.

John Nilsson
President and CEO