



PINNACLEHEALTH
Hospitals

June 29, 2010

Joseph Martin
Executive Director
Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council
225 Market Street, Suite 400
Harrisburg, PA 17101

Dear Mr. Martin:

Pinnacle Health System would like to thank you for the opportunity to comment on the 2007-2008 combined and 2008 CABG and Valve Surgery Report. We support transparency and appreciate your efforts to improve quality care through public reporting.

Through our voluntary participation in the Society of Thoracic Surgeons database, we were able to quickly address the issue of higher than expected readmission rates in 2007. Our cardiovascular surgery quality committee has since put in place a successful performance improvement plan which has resulted in significantly lower readmission rates in 2009 which are lower than both Like Groups and ALL STS database participants. In 2009, we implemented many quality initiatives which include pre-operative risk mitigation to reduce in-house mortality for all heart surgeries, including valve without CABG, and careful follow up with patients after they are discharged home. We continue to refine our processes to minimize mortality to the greatest extent possible.

Pinnacle Health's Cardiovascular Surgery program is committed to quality care and has been recognized as a Top 100 Cardiovascular Hospital by Thomson Reuters in 2008 and 2009 and has also been designated as a Blue Distinction Center for Cardiac Care in 2008 and 2009. We are proud of our reputation for exceptional care and will strive to continue to improve our cardiac surgical outcomes.

Sincerely,

Jean Yarrish Wiest
Vice President
Cardiovascular, Pulmonary & Transplant Services