



April 22, 2011

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

Dear Mr. Martin:

On behalf of Aria Health, we would like to thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council's Report on CABG and Valve Surgery for 2008-2009.

Aria conducts an ongoing internal review of our cardiac surgery cases, including data within both the mortality and readmission categories, as part of our broader, ongoing quality initiatives. During the past several years, Aria has identified an opportunity to improve our documentation to more accurately reflect the higher risk profiles of our cardiac patients. This has been accomplished by utilizing the Society of Thoracic Surgeons (STS) database, a nationally recognized standard and clinical benchmarking system. As a result of a survey that Aria received from the PHC4 last summer, we know that you have also given consideration to possibly using the STS database as a mechanism for risk adjusting outcomes in future cardiac surgery reports. At Aria, we have re-focused our performance improvement efforts on specific steps to target these indicators, with positive results. The STS methodology more adequately addresses the severity of patient clinical condition and its impact on outcomes. Our latest STS reports reflecting the most current outcomes for 2010 demonstrate them to be within the range expected of similar hospitals regionally and nationally.

Aria appreciates the Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council's ongoing efforts to educate the public about the quality of health care in Pennsylvania. We continuously strive for excellence in patient care and remain committed to delivering the highest level of quality cardiac surgical care.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "D. Bucci".

Domenick Bucci, MD  
Chief Medical Officer  
Aria Health