



October 27, 2006

Marc P. Volavka, Executive Director
Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council
225 Market Street, Suite 400
Harrisburg, PA 17101

Dear Mr. Volavka:

Mercy Fitzgerald Hospital (MFH) recognizes that preventing healthcare acquired infections (HAI) is a major patient safety priority and supports the collection and the public reporting of HAI information. MFH believes this information is useful for our patients and can assist hospitals in their efforts to improve the quality and safety of care.

MFH seeks to achieve reductions in HAIs through programs to identify, control exposure and minimize risk to patients. MFH also participates in local, regional and national initiatives to reduce HAI. In addition, MFH has an Infection Control Practitioner and an active program for the prevention, control and investigation of infections and communicable diseases, and for reporting these activities.

The goal of MFH is to have no hospital-acquired infections. MFH is pleased that more than 98% of our patients did not acquire even one of the nosocomial infections reviewed in the PHC4 study.

We note that the current methodology utilized by PHC4 to collect and report HAI data is not able to distinguish the actual impact of HAI on hospital days, mortality and morbidity. At the present time, there are no clinically validated benchmarks by which this data can be evaluated. MFH's HAI statistics are adversely impacted because the population served by the hospital. For instance, approximately 10% of MFH's population is admitted from long term care facilities. The infection rate for this population, due to the presence of multiple indwelling devices and general debility, generally exceeds that of the regular population.

Physicians, nurses and other hospital staff work every day to provide the best possible care for our patients. MFH administrators and clinicians understand that we must continue to take action to ensure that the risk of infection is minimized.

Mercy Fitzgerald Hospital is committed to providing quality care to our patients will continue to support and participate in patient safety programs that focus on improving patient care.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Marsha Rowe".

Marsha Rowe
Chief Operating Officer

MR:bh