
St. Joseph Medical Center

**Marc Volavka, Executive Director
Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council**

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the first ever Hospital Acquired Infections Report. We take the reporting of this data very seriously and are proud to have been commended for the job we did in identifying and reporting infections.

We have reviewed the data for all of the information submitted, paying special attention to those where the PHC4 report has indicated mortality was linked to a hospital acquired infection. For the public who is seeing this, like all of us, for the first time, there are several things they need to know in order to have context for the data. St. Joseph Medical Center traditionally treats a high-risk population, made more so by the lower socio-economic status of the inner-city residents we serve.

Additionally, we have a high incidence of elderly patients who come to St. Joseph for end of life care. Often, such patients are suffering from terminal diseases which often compromise their immune system, making them even more vulnerable to infection. The average age of the patients who died was 70 years old and all had Do Not Resuscitate orders. Further, many of the patients had numerous problems, and co-morbidities, that complicated their condition.

We continually review and implement policies and procedures that will have an impact on infections. In fact, infection prevention is the cornerstone of the patient safety improvements in our new hospital opening in November. The new building has advanced air quality controls, including an increased number of negative pressure rooms for patients with airborne illnesses. With the predominance of private rooms, there will be reduced exposure from patient to patient and more space to isolate patient with infections. Also, more strategically located hand-washing stations will promote strong infection control practices.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond and for your efforts around establishing standards, which we hope all hospitals will comply with in the future.

Sincerely,

Mike Jupina

