

SHARON REGIONAL HEALTH SYSTEM

October 20, 2008



*Advanced Care
Close to Home*

Advanced Wound Recovery Center
Behavioral Health Services
Brain Attack/Stroke Center
Breast Care Center
Cancer Care Center
Chest Pain Emergency Center
Comprehensive Pain Management Center
Corporate Health Services
Diabetes Center
Diagnostic & Imaging Center
Ear, Nose, Throat & Hearing Center
Emergency Care Center
Express Care
Family Medicine Centers
Heart Institute
Home Health Agency
Hospice/Palliative Care Hospital
Inpatient Rehab Unit
Physician Services
Rehabilitation Services
School of Nursing
School of Radiography
Sleep Center
Surgical Services
Therapeutic Pool
Transitional Care Unit
Women's Center

Facility Locations
Sharon
Hermitage
Mercer
Greenville
Brookfield, OH

Main Campus
740 East State Street
Sharon, PA 16146-3395
724-983-3911
www.sharonregional.com

John A. Zidanssek
President & CEO

*A Smoke/Tobacco
Free Facility*

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

Dear Mr. Wilderman:

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Health Care Cost Containment Council's *Hospital-acquired Infections in Pennsylvania Report*. Sharon Regional Health System has aggressively addressed HAIs over the past few years.

Mortality Comments:

Sharon Regional Health System earned APEX Awards in 2006, 2007, and 2008 from VHA for control of extremely serious infections, including ventilator associated (device associated) pneumonia and blood stream infections.

The incidence of "multiple infections" and "device associated urinary tract" infections by PHC4 have been low at Sharon Regional, making the denominator in the rating equation too low for significance. Therefore even with exceptionally low incidences of death, the results of such a data analysis used in computation of such mortality rates is skewed.

The actual numbers used to judge the results were only three deaths for device associated UTI, and two for multiple infections. Chart review found that the deaths were not linked to the presence of the UTI. Both the UTIs and the presence of multiple infections were indicators of how ill these individuals were rather than causes of death in and of themselves.

Overall incidence figures and mortality figures reflect the vigilance and conscientiousness of the nursing and medical staff.

Occurrence:

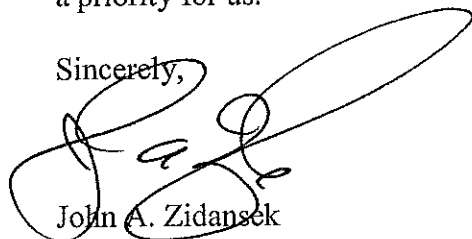
Pneumonia – 16 cases were reported. Only four patients were below the age of 65, with six being above age 80. In addition there were considerable pre-existing chronic illnesses, including individuals with various conditions considered high risk for pneumonias. Such conditions included myasthenia gravis, muscular dystrophy, quadriplegia with tracheostomy, and malnutrition. Other co-existing conditions included the presence of acute and chronic renal failure, prostatic hypertrophy, peritonitis, and generalized sepsis. Despite these obstacles we continue to employ new methods to further reduce the incidence of such infections.

Mr. Wilderman
October 20, 2008
Page 2

Urinary tract infections - There were 34 instances of HAI based on the CDC definitions in place in 2007. Of the 34 instances, 24 cases were included solely due to the presence of bacteria in the urine; there were no symptoms, elevation of temperature or white blood cell count in those 24 patients. The incidence of bacteria in the urine is often age related and roughly half of the 34 patients were over 80 years of age, with only four patients below the age of 65.

In conclusion, Sharon Regional Health System appreciates the opportunity to comment on these cases. Infection prevention has been and will continue to be a priority for us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John A. Zidasek', written over a large, light-colored oval shape.

John A. Zidasek
President & CEO

JAZ:sb