

October 13, 2003

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

Dear Mr. Volavka:

This letter is in response to *The Hospital Performance Report - (2002 Data)*. We thank you for this opportunity to comment on our hospital performance data. We would like to comment on two procedures where a higher than expected mortality rate was noted, Gallbladder Removal - Open and Cholorectal procedures.

For the Gallbladder Removal - Open procedure, a total of 2 cases are included under mortality. Review of these cases reveals the following:

- Both patients were ≥ 65 years of age
- Both patients exhibited comorbid conditions contributing to their mortality: one patient with hepatic encephalopathy secondary to hepatocellular cancer of the liver and the other case with acute renal failure secondary to acute pancreatitis

Cholorectal procedures were also reviewed for a higher than expected mortality rate. A total of 5 cases were reviewed and the following is noted:

- Three of the five patients were DNR status
- Average patient age was 72 years
- 60% of the cases had resection for malignancy with and without liver metastasis
- Other comorbid conditions included: acute renal failure, respiratory failure, acute MI, progressive hepatic dysfunction, and ischemic heart disease, all which contributed to patients' demise

Another area of comment is DRG 204 - Acute Pancreatitis identified on the PHC4 Web site as an area with higher than expected mortality rate. Three cases were reviewed and the following is noted:

- All three patients were > 80 years of age (Acute Pancreatitis in the elderly is associated with an extremely high morbidity and mortality rate.)
- Two of the three patients were DNR status

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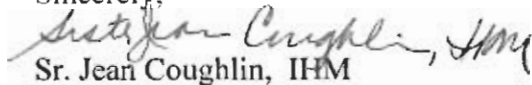
- All three patients exhibited other comorbid conditions that included acute hemorrhagic pancreatitis, multi-organ failure, acute renal failure and CVA

The last areas we would like to comment on are the conditions, Blood Clot in Extremities and Kidney and Urinary Tract Infections, both with higher than expected Length of Stays. These cases were reviewed and the following was identified:

- Serious comorbid conditions such as acute renal failure, diabetes, congestive heart failure and leg ulcers were present in all cases and effected the course of treatment and length of stay
- In all cases patients were seriously ill, elderly with a mean age of 77 years with the oldest being 92 years of age
- Majority of the patients were from a skilled nursing facility (66%)
- In all cases UTI or Blood clot of the extremity was not the sole diagnoses or the only condition treated or the most serious diagnosis.

Opportunities for improvement are continually being sought to provide the highest quality of care to our patients at Marian Community Hospital. Our hospital continues to support the intent of the Council in publishing cost and outcome data that encourages quality of care at our facility and throughout the state of PA.

Sincerely,



Sr. Jean Coughlin, IHM
President and CEO