



October 3, 2003

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

Dear Mr. Volavka,

I would like to respond regarding the information for Riddle Memorial Hospital (PAF 1520) being published in the *Hospital Performance Report* (Federal fiscal year 2002 data). In this report, the mortality information for Riddle Memorial Hospital is flagged as being significantly higher than expected for both Pneumonia- Aspiration and Septicemia. For the information published on PHC4's web site, the mortality information is flagged as being higher than expected for DRG 005 – Removal of Blockage in Head and Neck Vessel. In investigation, the following information was found.

For Pneumonia – Aspiration, there were 35 mortalities reported. The average Admission Severity Grade was 3.0 (range of 0 – 4), indicating that these patients were very ill on admission. The average age was 83 years and 86% were from long-term care facilities. Thirty-two (32) of the 35 had orders to "Do Not Resuscitate" on the chart in honor of the patient or family wishes; 2 of the remaining 3 patients had resuscitation attempted.

For Septicemia, there were 36 mortalities reported. The average Admission Severity grade was 3.3, indicating that these patients were also very ill on admission. The average age was 81 years with 64% of them from long-term care facilities. Thirty-two (32) of the 36 also had orders to "Do Not Resuscitate" on the chart in honor of the patient or family wishes; the remaining 4 patients had resuscitation attempted.

DRG 005, identified by PHC4 as "Removal of Blockage in Head and Neck Vessel", is officially titled "Extracranial Vascular Procedures" by Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). For DRG 005, there was one mortality listed for Riddle Memorial Hospital. This single mortality was in a patient who had been diagnosed with inoperable brain cancer during a previous hospitalization a few months prior to the hospitalization in which he passed away. He did have removal of a blood clot from his leg in an effort to salvage the limb, but he did not have surgery on or removal of a blockage in his head or neck vessels. He also had an order to "Do Not Resuscitate" in compliance with his wishes.

The Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council provides a valuable service in providing this information to the public and by allowing the opportunity for organizations involved to respond to any concerns that may be raised. However, we would like to ask that DNR status be considered when developing the database and statistical analysis for reporting. Thank you for this opportunity to address this information.

Sincerely,

Diane L. Christie
Director, Quality/Risk Management