



ALLE-KISKI MEDICAL CENTER

WEST PENN ALLEGHENY HEALTH SYSTEM

ALLEGHENY VALLEY HOSPITAL
1301 CARLISLE STREET, NATRONA HEIGHTS, PA 15065
724-224-5100

CITIZENS AMBULATORY CARE CENTER
651 FOURTH AVENUE, NEW KENSINGTON, PA 15068
724-334-AKMC (2562)

September 13, 2004

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

Dear Mr. Volavka,

The following are the comments submitted on behalf of Alle-Kiski Medical Center in response to the release of Hospital Performance Report 2003:

The Hospital was identified as having a significant Short LOS Outlier Rating for DRG 127 Heart Failure and Shock. There were 822 patients discharged in this DRG. Fifty-seven (57) of the patients were identified as short LOS outliers. AKMC's shorter ALOS is attributable to the following process improvements in relation to this DRG:

- Interdisciplinary approach to discharge planning on admission
- Use of standards of care
- Efficient use of resources

We have accomplished this without having significant increases in our mortality or readmission rates.

AKMC was also identified as having a (significant readmission rate for any reason) for Diabetes with Amputation. There were 12 patients with 6 readmissions. We identified the following facts surrounding these readmissions:

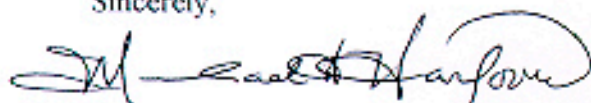
- Small volume of cases
- All of the patients had severe co-morbid conditions such as CHF and Renal Failure
- Two patients were readmitted for more extensive surgery. It is not uncommon for patients and families to initially favor more limited surgery.
- One patient was readmitted with an infection of his stump.

AKMC's Primary Service Areas has a higher incidence of Diabetes and associated complications. In response to an overwhelming need for more sophisticated diabetes management, AKMC is partnering with the Joslin Diabetes Program in November, 2004 to open an outpatient diabetes program.

Through an active Performance Improvement Program, the Hospital and Medical Staff work together continuously to evaluate and improve the care provided to our patients. We support the work of the Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council in its efforts to enhance service effectiveness.

I believe this letter addresses AKMC's variances in the 2003 Hospital Performance Report. Please reach me at 724-226-7263 to provide any further clarification you may need.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael A. Harlovic". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Michael A. Harlovic
Vice President Patient Care Services

pc: Cindy Schamp
President and CEO