

SAINT VINCENT HEALTH CENTER
232 West 25 Street
Erie, Pennsylvania 16544



September 9, 2004

Marc P. Volavka
Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council (PHC4)
225 Market Street
Harrisburg, PA 17101

Dear Mr. Volavka,

We would like to comment on the most recent PHC4 Hospital Effectiveness Report. In this report, Saint Vincent Health Center is listed as having a significantly higher than expected Complication/Infection Readmission Rate for Laparoscopic Gallbladder Removal.

We have analyzed our own internal numbers. In our analysis, we have found that a significant number of our laparoscopic gallbladder surgeries are done as outpatients. Only those patients who are more prone to complications are admitted as inpatients with this procedure. We believe that many other hospitals do not use outpatient status for this procedure, or not to the degree we do. As a result, these hospitals would have a higher volume of cases to divide their complications across.

We suggest that if PHC4 wants to continue to review readmissions for this procedure, that they should include in the denominator all such surgeries – whether done as inpatient or outpatient. This would level the field between hospitals with different philosophies about doing this procedure as an outpatient.

Sincerely,

SAINT VINCENT HEALTH CENTER

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Stephen D. Osborn".

Stephen D. Osborn, CHE, CPHQ
Vice President, Clinical Quality and Patient Safety

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