

Medical Staff/Medical Education

September 8, 2005

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

Dear Mr. Volavka:

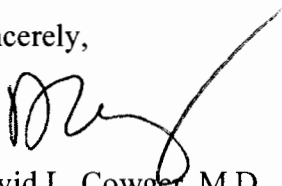
Altoona Regional Health System welcomes the opportunity to comment on the statistical results from the Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council's Fiscal Year 2004 Hospital Performance Report.

To begin, we would like to assure you and the public that all cases of patient mortality at Altoona Regional Health System are thoroughly reviewed by Peer Review Committees of Physicians for any deficiencies. Furthermore, the cases of mortality contained in the latest Hospital Performance Report received additional review and we found that the physicians provided excellent medical care and used sound judgement in their decision making.

Our review did note that in every case of mortality, the patient presented to Altoona Regional Health System with severe chronic diseases, as well as in critical and unstable conditions. Aggressive life-saving measures were possible in some of the cases. However, the families most often refused these measures due to the long and complex battles that their loved ones already endured due to their disease. As well, in most cases, living wills and other advanced directives asked that no heroic measures were to be undertaken under any circumstance to prolong their lives.

Altoona Regional Health System welcomes the opportunity to respond to your review and appreciates the data you have been able to provide. We will use this data as yet another opportunity for us to improve and strengthen our ability to provide high quality, cost-effective care.

Sincerely,



David L. Cowger, M.D.
Medical Director/Quality Affairs



Michael-Gerard Moncman, D.O.
President, Medical Staff

DLC/bac

cc: James W. Barner, President/Chief Executive Officer