

September 13, 2005

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

Dear Mr. Volavka:

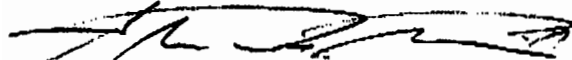
On behalf of Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the upcoming PHC4 2004 Hospital Performance Report. In the data presented Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center was noted to have six conditions in which the mortality rating was noted to be higher than expected.

On retrospective review of the cases reported in the aggregate, there was noted to be a large percentage of cases in which there was significant and serious co-morbidity in addition to the final DRG. There is a significant incidence of complicating end stage renal disease with dialysis in our patient population due to the fact that we offer the only inpatient dialysis service in Schuylkill County. Therefore the number of mortalities in these DRG's is impacted by the fact that there is complicating renal failure in these patients. Additionally, a large number of the deaths can also be attributed to the high incidence of metastatic carcinoma complicating other disease processes in our patient population.

Thus, a number of factors contribute to the higher mortality rates including high incidence of renal failure, advanced age of the population, and complicating medical diseases. For example, in the diagnosis group hip fracture surgical repair, of the mortalities two patients were complicated by end stage renal disease on hemodialysis, one patient was 94 years old who had suffered a hemorrhagic cerebral vascular accident (CVA) on post operative day two, and another patient suffered an embolic CVA as a complication of long term atrial fibrillation on post operative day one.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the report.

Sincerely,



Thomas W. McLaughlin, MD  
Chief Medical Officer

TWM/csn