



Lancaster General

September 19, 2006

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

Dear Mr. Volavka:

Thank you for the opportunity to participate and comment on the 2005 Hospital Performance Report. Members of our medical staff and Quality Improvement Department compared the report's findings with our medical records and now provide the following observations:

There was a greater than expected mortality rate for patients with aspiration pneumonia. All of these cases had advance directives requesting no resuscitation or extraordinary means to preserve their lives. Lancaster General Hospital respects the dignity of patients by honoring their wishes and instituting medically appropriate care. Aspiration pneumonia cases often require aggressive intervention, including intubation and ventilation. The advance directives of the patients limit our ability to provide maximum support and treatment. It is also important to note that all but one of the patients who died were age 73 years or greater and 78% were older than 80 years of age.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the information included in your latest report.

Sincerely,

Bruce H. Pokorney, M.D.
Vice President, Medical Affairs