

September 20, 2006

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

Dear Mr. Volavka:

On behalf of Pennsylvania Hospital, we would like to thank you for the opportunity to comment on the 2005 Hospital Performance Report. We appreciate the time and effort involved in reporting information related to cost and outcomes of healthcare in Pennsylvania. After careful review of the report, we would like to provide these additional observations.

We would like to respond to the mortality ratings that were marked as significantly higher than expected. In the Septicemia category of cases almost all of the patients were admitted emergently with the highest severity and risk of mortality on admission. Over half of these patients were extremely ill with infections and other co-morbid conditions, admitted directly to intensive care for monitoring and treatment. These patients expired despite intensive medical care within one to three days of admission. The Removal of Blockage of Neck Vessels included two patients aged 82 and 94 respectively both who were very ill with neurological symptoms prior to their surgical procedures. Finally the patients in DRG 203 Liver, Gallbladder or Pancreatic Cancer were all admitted with the highest severity and risk of mortality on admission. All the patients requested to not be resuscitated (DNR), received symptom management and comfort care. It would appear that the performance report does not adequately risk-adjust end-stage cancer patients to eliminate this higher than expected category.

In the re-admission category we would like to note that one very ill patient with angiodysplasia of intestines appropriately accounted for over one third of the readmissions in Stomach and Intestinal Bleeding requiring treatment for anemia and other symptom management.

We continuously review the quality of patient care at Pennsylvania Hospital for improvement opportunities. Thank you for the inclusion of this information with the published report.

Sincerely,


Kathleen Kinslow, CRNA, EdD, MBA
Executive Director


R. Michael Buckley, MD
Chief Medical Officer