



1800 East Park Avenue • State College, PA 16803-6797 • 814-231-7000 • www.mountnittany.org

September 15, 2009

David H. Wilderman, Acting Executive Director
Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council
225 Market Street, Suite 400
Harrisburg, PA 17101

Dear Mr. Wilderman:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the FFY2008 Hospital Performance Report. We at Mount Nittany Medical Center support the use of comparative reports to identify opportunities for improvement. We analyze comparative data on a regular basis as part of our internal performance improvement process. We also participate in voluntary public reporting of our quality data through The Joint Commission, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), and the Pennsylvania Healthcare Quality Alliance.

We offer comment on the three conditions with mortality rates greater than expected. The majority of patients (90%) in the disease groups of congestive heart failure (CHF), chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), and kidney and urinary tract infection, expressed wishes for no resuscitation at the time of their admission to the Medical Center and/or expressed wishes for comfort care only during the admission. As noted in the Council's prior Hospital Performance Reports, "The mortality analysis includes Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) cases." We agree with the Council's note in prior public reports that "A hospital death is frequently an unavoidable consequence of a patient's medical condition." We believe that these deaths were anticipated given the severity of the patients' illnesses and the expressed wishes of the patients and family. In 2008 we implemented a palliative care consultation process to support patients and their families. We continue to evaluate care for these patient populations through attention to evidence-based performance measures, such as the measures that are publically reported, and individual case review. All patient mortalities are reviewed on an individual basis to identify opportunities for improvement.

We welcome information that helps us improve care for our patients and we thank the Council for the opportunity to comment on this report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard J. Wisniewski", written in a cursive style.

Richard J. Wisniewski
President and Chief Executive Officer