

September 14, 2017

Joseph Martin, Executive Director
Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council
225 Market St., Suite 400
Harrisburg, PA 17101

Dear Mr. Martin:

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to this year's report.

We are very pleased with the results of the data presented to us this year by the Health Care Cost Containment Council. We have only one fallout in the categories: heart failure readmissions. This was identified internally as a problematic area. We realize that there are many factors that influence heart failure admissions. With this in mind, we have put together a multidisciplinary team. The team not only includes hospital personnel, but also has representatives from local home health and skilled nursing facilities. We hope to see our improvement in our readmission rate reflected in next years' report. Of course, not all readmissions are related to the index admission. Perhaps future reports could reflect a heart failure-to-heart failure readmission rate, as this statistic would be more meaningful in assessing the quality of care provided to the heart failure patient.

The remainder of the categories shows our hospital to be within the expected range. We even have a lower-than-expected readmission rate for sepsis. This is a testament to our very aggressive team approach to quality improvement, which has been very successful in correcting previous issues. We are proud of our teams, and it is very gratifying to see our hard work pay off.

Our commitment to providing cost-effective, quality health care to our community drives our corporate vision. We will continue to strive for further improvement in our care of our patients, and we look forward to your reports for use as benchmarks in our continuing quality improvement projects.

Yours truly,



Barbara A. Vilushis, DO
Associate Medical Director, Lehigh Valley Hospital- Hazleton