

GREATER HAZLETON HEALTH ALLIANCE

Hazleton General Hospital

Hazleton-Saint Joseph
Medical Center

Hazleton Healthcare
Foundation

Hazleton Medical
Center

Hazleton
Physician Center

Hazleton Diagnostic Plus

Hazleton Home Care

Hazleton
Medical Services

Hazleton Cancer Center

Hazleton Dental
Center

Marc P. Volavka
Executive Director
Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council
225 Market Street
Suite 400
Harrisburg, Pa. 17101

November 30, 1999

Dear Mr. Volavka:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Hazleton General Hospital's 1998 Hospital Performance Report.

The Performance Report reveals that, overall, our hospital compares favorably with other hospitals statewide. However, there were areas in the report that concerned us, most notably in the area of mortality statistics in DRG 014, Stroke. Upon receipt of this information, patient charts were reviewed. This review yielded some interesting insights:

1. The statistical analysis separates patients with regards to age. According to the report, 89.7% of our stroke patients were over the age of 65, as compared to the statewide average of 79.2%. In fact, the majority of our patients were over the age 70, with many over the age of 80.
2. The statistics do not reflect the differences in the types of stroke. In a large number of cases reviewed, the strokes were hemorrhagic in nature. This type of stroke has a higher degree of mortality than a stroke caused by an infarction.
3. In some of these cases, the patient had more than one reason to present to the hospital; e.g. the patient had a stroke plus an acute cardiac problem. In these cases, the actual cause of death was unrelated to the stroke, but was reported as a stroke death.

Hazleton General Hospital is committed to providing high quality care to the residents of the Hazleton area, and will continue to welcome any information that will help us to improve delivery of our services.

Yours truly,



Barbara A. Vilushis DO
Chairperson, Utilization Management

Hazleton Healthcare Foundation

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