



**PINNACLE**  
Health System

December 1, 1999

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

Dear Mr. Volavka:

Community General Osteopathic Hospital, now part of PinnacleHealth System, thanks Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment for the opportunity to comment on the *Hospital Performance Report*. The first three quarters of 1998 data are included in the report. The fourth quarter Community General data was submitted under PinnacleHealth Hospitals and is not included in the report.

The 15 DRG's within the report total 837 patients (only 26 percent of patients treated at Community General Osteopathic Hospital during 1998). Community General has a high percentage of nursing home admissions and over 25 percent of the patients admitted were from an extended care facility. Community General has worked with Volunteer Hospitals of America (VHA) to assist in evaluation and explanation of our data. An interesting finding was that Community General has four (4) times the VHA hospitals' state average of admissions from a nursing home. Nursing home residence is not captured as a risk adjuster in the CIC-MediQual Atlas Severity of Illness System.

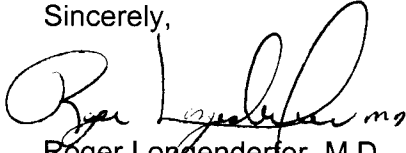
Community General had a higher than expected mortality in three DRGs. A review of all of the mortalities in the 15 DRGs noted that 85 percent of the patients had a DNR (do not resuscitate) assignment to comply with patient and family end of life decisions. Thirty nine or 42 percent of the patients were from an extended care facility. The average age of the patients was 80 years, and the average admission severity was three (0-4 scale) or in other words, a high potential for organ failure.

The high percentage of nursing home patients certainly contributes to the higher length of stays and charges. Length of stay is also impacted by end of life decisions and indeed 37 percent of the patients included in the report had a DNR (do not resuscitate) assignment. Movement of these patients outside of the acute care hospitalization is many times hampered due to continuum of care and placement issues.

Page 2  
Mr. Mark Volavka

*Hospital Performance Reports* are used within Community General Osteopathic Hospital's performance improvement program as benchmarks to improve care. In addition patient care guidelines and case management efforts have also been implemented. We applaud your strides in producing the soon released *Hospital Performance Report*.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Roger Longenderfer", written in a cursive style.

Roger Longenderfer, M.D.  
Senior Vice President of Medical Affairs

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