

GREATER HAZLETON HEALTH ALLIANCE

Hazleton General Hospital

Hazleton Saint Joseph
Medical Center

Hazleton Healthcare
Foundation

W. Cameron Medical
Center

Handmen
Rehabilitation Center

Healthy Beginnings Plus

Medical Home Care

Occupational
Health Services

Primary Care Centers

Rehabilitation and
Ergonomics 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 St. Joseph Medical Center'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, 89.8% 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 75, with many over the age of 90.
2. The statistics do not reflect the fact that the majority of our mortality cases either had a living will or the patient and/or family refused aggressive care, including transfer to a tertiary care facility.
3. In a significant number of these cases, the patient was alone at the time of the stroke, thus delaying treatment. This is a social issue, but it certainly impacts on the outcome of treatment.

Hazleton St. Joseph Medical Center 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
Reviewer, Utilization Management

Hazleton Healthcare Foundation

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