



Sacred Heart Hospital

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November 30, 1999

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

Dear Mr. Volavka:

We appreciate the opportunity to be able to submit comments regarding the soon-to-be released *1998 Hospital Performance Report – 15 Medical Procedures and Treatments* and applaud the Commission for its ongoing efforts to inform the public of performance outcomes on these common medical procedures.

The performance report indicated that Sacred Heart Hospital's outcomes for the various DRG's listed was within the standards of care. However, in two areas actual mortality exceeded the expected calculated mortality.

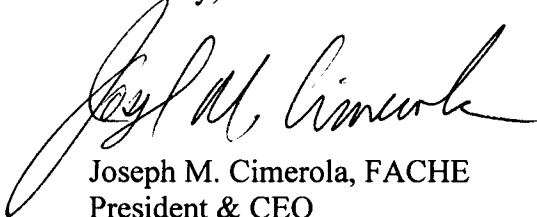
The first group reported was DRG 130 (peripheral vascular disorders with complication or comorbid condition), which would include diagnoses such as deep vein thrombosis, severe peripheral arterial disease, gangrene or venous insufficiency. On review of the medical records of these five patients who died during the hospital stay, four cases documented a cause of death related to another condition such as coronary heart disease, metastatic lung cancer, chronic renal failure and intracerebral bleed.

With respect to DRG 174 (gastrointestinal hemorrhage with complication or comorbid condition), review of these eight mortalities indicates that although patients may be admitted for acute gastrointestinal bleeding, each patient had multiple significant contributing factors, such as atrial fibrillation, diabetes mellitus, cirrhosis with probable hepatoma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, bladder cancer, renal failure and stroke.

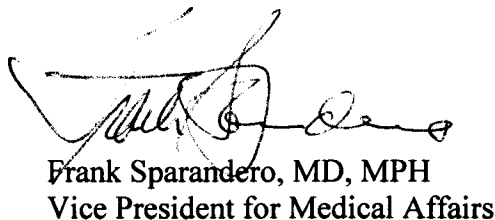
Therefore, when reviewing these data with regard to mortality rates, it is crucial to keep in mind that although the principal diagnosis may indicate one condition, the cause of death may be related to something entirely different with contribution from multiple medical problems.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to respond and for your continued commitment to provide quality data to the public.

Sincerely,



Joseph M. Cimerola, FACHE
President & CEO



Frank Sparandero, MD, MPH
Vice President for Medical Affairs

JMC & FS/kab

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