



December 1, 1999

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

Dear Mr. Volavka,

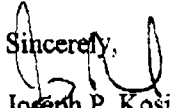
As you are aware Temple University Hospital has long been an advocate for the public reporting of clinically adjusted outcome information. To this end, we've assisted the Council in your efforts to produce several meaningful reports. We are therefore extremely disappointed that the Council has chosen to abandon its ground breaking work which produced reports such as Coronary Artery Bypass and Acute Heart Attack in favor of mass producing data in the form of the recent "hospital performance report."

A review of several of the categories (DRGs) included in this report finds an alarming variation in clinical diagnoses, patient presentation, as well as procedures performed. So broad are several of these categories, that comparison is rendered meaningless. For example, category 110, "Major Vessel Operations" includes the following types of cases: repairs to major blood vessels, heart valve procedures, aneurysm repairs, implantation of heart assistance devices, insertion of balloon pumps, repair of heart lacerations secondary to trauma. A comparative analysis of any single procedure included in this global category would be beneficial, however, the dissimilarity within the group makes this comparative report misleading and harmful.

Wide variations in patient groupings were also noted in several other categories contained in this report.

While the effort to produce information that is meaningful to consumers is time consuming and costly, the alternative is a disservice to the public and the provider community.

Sincerely,


Joseph P. Kosich
Assistant Vice President
Health Information Management