



November 24, 1999

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

Dear Mr. Volavka:

This letter is submitted in response to the Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council's 1998 Hospital Performance Report of 15 Common Medical Procedures and Treatments.

In examining the three DRG's with higher than expected mortality for our facility, many factors were discovered. Several patients with major risk factors were significantly younger than 65, skewing the age demographic detail. In addition, over 85% of the patients in each of these DRG's had a "Do Not Resuscitate " order.

DRG 089 Adult Pneumonia:

Of the deaths occurring in DRG Adult Pneumonia 83% percent of the patients were 74 years or older; 56% had a chronic lung condition. The PA Department of Health provides the statistic that 24% of residents are smokers. In this report, 56% of the mortalities were smokers. Other co-morbid factors included, but were not limited to: CAD, diabetes and previous stroke/TIA. In recognition of the incidence of pneumonia in this region, Conemaugh will be participating in KeyPRO National Pneumonia Project.

DRG 082 Lung Cancer:

Of the deaths occurring in the DRG lung cancer, 73% were 65 years or older and 86% had a history of preexisting or other cancers. Additional co-morbid factors included: preexisting lung disease, CAD and history of smoking. In recognition of the incidence of cancer in our community, we have recently affiliated with Fox Chase National Cancer Center to expand the resources available to the region.

DRG 014 Stroke:

Of the deaths occurring in the DRG stroke, 71% were 74 years or older. Significant co-morbid factors included, but were not limited to: sickle cell crisis, down's syndrome, previous stroke/TIA, diabetes, CAD and subarachnoid hemorrhage.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this report.

Sincerely,

Steven E. Tucker
President of Memorial Medical Center

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