



November 22, 1999

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

Dear Mr. Volavka:

The following are the comments submitted on behalf of Monongahela Valley Hospital in response to the release of the 1998 Hospital Performance Report - 15 Common Medical Procedures and Treatments.

The Hospital was identified as having a statistically significant high mortality rate in two (2) DRGs: DRG 14, Stroke and DRG 148, Major Intestinal Procedures.

Monongahela Valley Hospital treated 199 patients in DRG 14, Stroke, and 32 patients died. This yielded a mortality rate of 16.1% compared to the "expected" rate of 10.7%. Upon review of the 32 death cases, it was noted that these patients had a higher admission severity of 3.1 when compared to the State and Western Pennsylvania average of 2.2, so clearly these patients were sicker upon admission to the Hospital. The average age of these patients was 80 years of age and the patients suffered from secondary medical conditions such as congestive heart failure, chronic kidney disease, cardiac ischemia, irregular heart beats (atrial fibrillation), previous stroke, previous coronary artery bypass surgery and severe malnutrition. It was also noted that 29 of the 32 patients had "*Do Not Resuscitate Orders*" signed, prohibiting further life saving measures from being taken.

Monongahela Valley Hospital treated 117 patients in DRG 148, Major Intestinal Procedures, and according to the Council's data, 15 patients expired yielding a mortality rate of 12.8% compared to the "expected" rate of 7.2%. Monongahela Valley Hospital's internal review identified only 14 patients that expired and a mortality rate of 11.9% which was within the expected range. A review of the cases was conducted and it was noted that the patients that died had a higher admission severity of 2.7 when compared to the State and Western Pennsylvania average of 1.9, so these patients also were clearly sicker upon admission to the Hospital. The average age of these patients was 80.1 years of age and the patients suffered from secondary medical conditions such as congestive heart failure, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, irregular heart beats, chronic kidney disease, previous heart attack or coronary artery bypass surgery, severe malnutrition and alzheimer's disease. It was also noted that 11 of the cases had "*Do Not Resuscitate Orders*" signed, prohibiting further life saving measures from being taken.



Monongahela  
Valley  
Hospital, Inc.

Following review of all of the above cases, no areas of concern were identified. Those patients that expired received quality patient care and died as a result of the natural progression of complicated medical conditions and secondary diseases.

The Hospital's mission is to enhance the health of the residents of the mid-Mon Valley and the hospital continues its commitment to provide our community with the highest quality care to meet their health care needs.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Donna Ramusivich".

Donna L. Ramusivich  
Vice President Professional Services and Quality