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

Dear Mr. Volavka:

Aetna sincerely appreciates the opportunity to review the latest iteration of *Measuring the Quality of Pennsylvania's Commercial HMOs: A Managed Care Performance Report*. We applaud the continued efforts of the Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council to analyze objective health care data to measure clinical performance, and to make this information available to the public. We share the goal of providing physicians and hospitals with objective measures of performances that help them improve the quality of health care our members receive. U.S. Quality Algorithms (USQA) is Aetna's performance improvement and outcomes measurement resource and has been a leader in using data to develop patient safety and quality improvement programs.

Aetna has long supported the concept that doctors, hospitals and medical providers strive to deliver the best care they can and welcome credible, statistically valid outcomes information. In this light, Aetna similarly welcomes information regarding our own performance. We diligently review the findings of this report and other similar reports and seek opportunities to improve the quality of care and service rendered to our members.

We are confident that PHC4 performed a statistically valid study and we recognize and respect the position of leadership PHC4 holds in the area of healthcare analysis. We would be remiss if we did not comment on the possibility that some of the variation in outcome measures reported may be a result of unmeasured confounding variables, such as geographic variations in the delivery of care in a state as large as Pennsylvania.

Aetna remains committed to promoting improved care and services to our membership. Our achievement of an accreditation status of Excellent by the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) reflects this commitment. We applaud the efforts of PHC4 to improve the quality of care in Pennsylvania.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Patricia P. Mueller, MD".

Patricia P. Mueller, MD
Mid-Atlantic Regional Medical Director