

December 10, 2002

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

Dear Mr. Volavka:

We thank you for the opportunity to comment on the PHC4 Hospital Performance Report received on November 21, 2002 at Armstrong County Memorial Hospital.

In your final results of the analysis, we are providing the following written comments relating to three DRGs which are significantly higher in actual mortality rating.

Formal Comments

PAF1730

Armstrong County Memorial Hospital

Observed Mortality for three DRG's. Investigating the medical records, the following information is being submitted:

1. Congestive Heart Failure

Armstrong County Memorial Hospital's review of each of the 17 individual medical records indicates that Congestive Heart Failure in 8 cases was not the cause of death. Other significant findings were:

- a. Average age of the patient was 79 years old.
- b. 14 out of 17 patients revealed a DNR (Do Not Resuscitate) order, which is 82.4% of cases.
- c. Four patients had a Length of Stay (1 day or less), which is 23.5% of cases.
- d. Seven patients were readmissions within 30 days - 41.2%.

2. DRG 174 GI Hemorrhage

Armstrong County Memorial Hospital's review of each of the nine individual medical records indicates that GI Hemorrhage in four cases was not the cause of death. Other significant findings were:

- a. Average age of the patient was 81 years.
- b. Four out of 9 patients revealed a DNR (Do Not Resuscitate) order, which is 44.4% of cases.
- c. Three patients had a Length of Stay (1 day or less), which is 33.3%.
- d. One patient was a readmission within 30 days - 11.1%.

3. DRG 316 Kidney Failure

Armstrong County Memorial Hospital's review of the nine individual medical records indicates that Kidney Failure in four cases was not the cause of death. Other significant findings were:

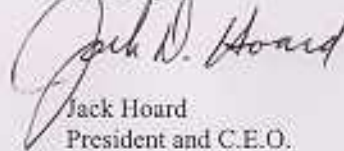
- a. Average age of the patient was 84.6 years old.
- b. Five out of nine patients revealed a DNR (Do Not Resuscitate) order, which is 55.5%.
- c. Three patients had a Length of Stay of 1 day or less which is 33.3% of cases.
- a. Three patients were readmissions within 30 days - 33.3% of cases.

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In conclusion, after a careful review of the report and the mortality cases in three DRGs, the higher mortality rate could be attributed to the combination of the elderly population, co-morbidities, the majority of admission from nursing homes and personal care homes and, respecting the patient's and family's request for no further resuscitation or aggressive measures. Do Not Resuscitate order is an important component in providing quality care and protecting patients rights.

The hospital will continue to monitor and trend these specific DRGs along with all other DRGs.

Sincerely,



Jack Hoard
President and C.E.O.

JAD/plb

Cc: Julia Duris, M.S.N., R.N.
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D. Wesley Minter, D.O.
Chairman of Quality Assessment/
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