



December 3, 2002

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

Dear Mr. Volavka,

Forbes Regional Hospital would like to thank the Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council (PHC4) for providing the opportunity to comment on the results of the 2001 Hospital Performance Report. Through our continuous efforts to enhance performance improvement initiatives, we utilize this information in conjunction with supplemental data to monitor, and continuously improve, the quality of our patient care.

Two areas identified for Forbes Regional Hospital, with what may appear to be a higher than expected mortality rate, were Medical Management Acute Myocardial Infarction (AMI) and DRG 182 - Stomach and Intestinal Infections and Disorders, Complicated. While the Hospital Performance Report produced by PHC4 analyzes data elements, we realize the need to look at every patient on a case-by-case basis.

Medical Management Acute Myocardial Infarction

There were 344 patients treated for AMI at Forbes Regional Hospital from January 1 to December 31, 2001. It should be noted that the mortality rate calculated by PHC4 did not include all of these 344 patients. The mortality rate calculated by PHC4 excluded 186 patients who, after appropriate stabilization and treatment, were transferred to another acute care facility for more advanced cardiac services. One patient that left against medical advice was also excluded from this rate.

The PHC4 mortality rate was calculated using the 157 patients who were not transferred to other facilities. Of the 157 patients who remained at Forbes for their care, there were 37 deaths. In concordance with and respect for the families'/patients' wishes, 84 % of these patients who died had "Do Not Resuscitate Orders." Their average age was 82 years. The average severity of illness score for these Forbes Regional patients was 2.7. The average severity of illness score for Western Pennsylvania was 2.5 and the statewide severity score was 2.5.

DRG 182 Stomach and Intestinal Infections and Disorders, Complicated

Of the patients who died, 83% had "Do Not Resuscitate Orders." Based on each patient's medical history, medical risk factors and evolution of their disease process, all mortalities were determined to be predictable events.

In summary, we appreciate the efforts of the Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council in taking a lead role in comparing hospital performance, and we will continue to improve the quality of patient care at Forbes Regional Hospital.

Sincerely,



Thomas J. Senker, FACHE
President & CEO



La Donna Fuge, M.D., FAAFP, FAHM
Medical Director