

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 at the Church Street Campus of the Greater Hazleton Health Alliance are very pleased with our overall performance in our statistics. We have made a great deal of progress in previously problematic areas. However, this year our mortality statistics are elevated in one category: Colorectal procedures.

We had six deaths out of 39 cases. On the surface, this appears to be an abnormally high percentage. However, each of these patients were, frail, elderly, and suffered from a number of comorbid conditions, such as cancer, emphysema, and renal failure. Four of the six patients were over the age of 80, with 2 patients over 90 years of age. All six patients were admitted on an emergent basis, and, in each case, surgery was the patient's only hope of survival. Unfortunately, these patients were unable to recover from the surgery, and expired in the hospital. All these deaths have been reviewed at a number of levels in the hospital, and the care rendered to these patients was appropriate and necessary.

We at the Greater Hazleton Health Alliance are committed to providing quality health care services to our community. Your statistics are a great help in this process.

Yours truly,



Barbara A. Vilushis, DO
Associate Medical Director, GHHA