

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:

There are 3 areas in the Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council's current Hospital Performance Report in which Jefferson Regional Medical Center's results are significantly higher than expected. We reviewed the relevant cases in detail, in order to further understand and explain these rates. Our findings for each of these 3 areas are outlined here.

#### Abdominal Hysterectomy

In this group, our data demonstrates a higher than expected mortality rate. This result is likely due to the relatively small number of cases in which abdominal hysterectomy was performed at our facility, as the data displayed here represents only 1 mortality. This particular case involved an elderly patient with multiple chronic medical problems, including a diagnosis of cancer. The patient died as a result of the combined effects of these problems which were unrelated to the surgical procedure.

#### Stroke – Non- Hemorrhagic

Data in this group of patients shows a rating of higher than expected short length of stay (LOS) outliers. There were 20 cases in this group that were identified as short stay outliers. Review of these cases showed that 50% of these had short LOS because they were moved to the acute rehabilitation setting rapidly, for timely and aggressive physical rehabilitation following their stroke. The remaining 50% of these cases had relatively minor strokes, no physical rehabilitation needs, and were medically stable and able to be discharged within a short period of time with post – discharge follow up. These cases did not experience readmission related to their hospitalization for the stroke.

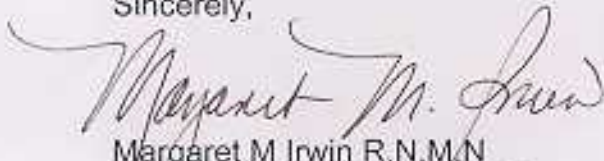
#### Poisoning and Toxic Effect of Drugs – Complicated

Data in this group of patients shows a rating of higher than expected long lengths of stay (LOS). This represents 6 cases in which there was a longer than

expected LOS. Review of these cases in detail demonstrates that all of these cases involved patients with multiple serious chronic medical problems, such as renal failure, hepatic toxicity and severe chronic respiratory disease that required extended hospitalization for appropriate care and medical stabilization of the patient.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on these areas. Jefferson Regional Medical Center fully supports the activities of PHC4 in providing this type of comparative healthcare information to providers and the public. Since the data alone do not explain the reasons for differences, it is important that additional explanatory information is available, so that findings are not misconstrued. We appreciate the commitment of PHC4 to enabling the provision of such explanations, so that our public is fully informed.

Sincerely,



Margaret M Irwin R.N.M.N  
Director, Quality and Case Management Programs  
Jefferson Regional Medical Center