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Allentown, PA 18105-1556



December 6, 2002

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

Dear Mr. Volavka:

We appreciate the opportunity to be able to submit comments regarding the soon-to-be released 2001 Hospital Performance Report – 50 DRGs on Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment's web site and applaud the Council for its ongoing efforts to inform the public of performance outcomes.

The Performance Report indicated that Lehigh Valley Hospital's mortality rating was greater than expected for DRG 091, Pediatric Pneumonia. Upon review, this represents a single patient with a genetic disorder and multiple medical complications. The family of this seven-year old had requested no heroic measures.

The Performance Report for Lehigh Valley Hospital – Muhlenberg reflected a higher than expected mortality rate for DRG 296, Nutritional and Metabolic Deficiencies, Complicated. Upon review, this represents eight mortalities, four of which were admitted with a DNR order. A higher than expected mortality rate was also identified in DRG 87, Pulmonary Edema and Respiratory Failure at Lehigh Valley Hospital – Muhlenberg. The review indicated that of the twelve mortalities, ten were admitted with a DNR order and the other 2 had DNR orders placed within 2 days of admission. All of the mortalities were in severity group three.

Again, we thank you for the opportunity to comment to this report. Any questions please do not hesitate to contact me at 610-402-1770.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paula Stillman".

Paula Stillman, MD
Senior Vice President
Quality and Care Management