

December 10, 2002

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

Dear Mr. Volavka:

This letter is in response to *The Hospital Performance Report - (2001 Data)*. We thank you for this opportunity to comment on our hospital performance data. We would like to comment on the procedure of Gallbladder Removal - Open. A total of 12 cases were reported under this procedure. A higher than expected mortality rate was reported. This mortality rate represents one case. Review of this case revealed the following:

- Patient was admitted with multiple complicating conditions including portal hypertension, hepatocellular carcinoma and cirrhosis
- Patient was a DNR
- Patient was known high risk for surgery

The additional areas we would like to comment on are DRG 320 - Kidney and Urinary Tract Infections; Pneumonia; and DRG 143 - Chest Pain. All three areas revealed a long length of stay outlier rating. Further review of these cases revealed the following areas that are felt to be contributing factors to an extended length of stay:

DRG 320 -- Kidney and Urinary Tract Infections, Complicated - (6 cases)

- 66.6% or (4) of the outlier cases were discharged to another facility or SNF.
- The average patient age for these outlier cases was 82 years.
- All of the patients had co-morbid conditions that included conditions such as senile dementia, psychiatric diagnoses, Alzheimer's, renal disease and cardiac disease.

Pneumonia - (16 cases)

- Only 25% or (4) of the outlier cases had a discharge disposition to home.
- The remainder of the cases were discharged to either another facility, Home Health or SNF. (The average age for these patients was 84 years.)
- All of the outlier cases exhibited multiple co-morbid conditions

DRG 143 - Chest Pain - (13 cases)

- 54% or (7) of the outlier patients necessitated discharge to Home Health or SNF.
- Patients awaiting Home Health or SNF discharge resulted in a longer length of stay.
- All of these patients had other co-morbid conditions.

Opportunities for improvement are continually being sought to provide the highest quality of care to our patients at Marian Community Hospital. Our hospital continues to support the intent of the Council in publishing cost and outcome data that encourages quality of care at our facility and throughout the state of PA.

Sincerely,

Sr. Jean Coughlin, IHM
President and CEO