

Nazareth Hospital

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:

Nazareth Hospital is appreciative of the opportunity to respond to the *PHC4 Hospital Performance Report (2001)*. In reviewing the final analyses for 2001, we note two areas of mortality that are at a rate higher than expected. We will briefly address each of those as follows:

Stroke – Hemorrhagic: There were 30 patients with *hemorrhagic strokes* admitted to Nazareth Hospital of which 17 died. The mortality rate of 57% is explained by the fact that the patients with this devastating condition were very elderly and this event represented a terminal condition upon their arrival to the Emergency Department. The community that Nazareth Hospital serves is the second oldest Congressional District in the United States. By contrast, of the 292 patients with *non-hemorrhagic stroke* the mortality rate was only 4.8%, which was below the expected rate of 5.7%.

DRG 154 – Stomach and Small Intestinal Operations, Complicated: Of the 12 patients admitted with this DRG, there were 4 deaths. In further reviewing these cases, it is noteworthy that each patient was an elderly patient with multi-system failure that included gangrenous bowel. Supportive care only could be provided. By contrast, there were 204 patient admitted with *DRG 174 – Stomach and Intestinal Bleeding, Complicated* with a mortality rate of 1.5% which was below the expected rate of 2.4%.

There were three disease categories: *Congestive Heart Failure, Heart Attack- Medical Management and DRG-138 Abnormal Heartbeat, Complicated* that were shown to have a higher than expected rate of "Long LOS outlier" rates. To improve the clinical effectiveness in these areas, Nazareth has instituted an intensive program of clinical management protocols.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the PHC4's very comprehensive report on healthcare in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Sincerely,



George J. Peckham, M.D.
Chief Medical Executive

cc: Patricia DeAngelis
President/CEO Nazareth Hospital