

 **Abington Memorial Hospital**

1200 Old York Road, Abington, PA 19001-3788

October 9, 2003

Health Care Cost Containment Council
222 Market Street, Suite 400
Harrisburg, PA 19701

Dear Health Care Cost Containment Council:

We have reviewed all of the reported adverse outcome cases in the major thoracic surgery category.

None of the eight deaths reported were in major resection cases such as lobectomies or pneumonectomies which had a 0% mortality at our institution. Seven of these eight procedures were lung biopsies performed for rapidly progressing pulmonary parenchymal disease in patients who were emergently admitted, failing standard medical therapy, and in whom studies up to that point had proven non-diagnostic. The median age of these patients was 76. Although these diagnostic attempts could have been perceived as possibly heroic, the multiple disciplinary approach to these complex pulmonary parenchymal/interstitial lung disease patients yielded consensus to proceed with these procedures in an attempt to arrive at a specific diagnosis to hopefully alter the course of their critical disease. All patients appear to have expired from progression of underlying disease.

One of the eight was a young woman with metastatic breast cancer who underwent chemical pleurodesis in an attempt to halt her rapidly progressing symptomatic metastatic pleural disease.

These eight procedures were performed by four different board certified general surgeons. All of the eight cases were extensively reviewed by internal peer review and no deviation from standard of care was identified.

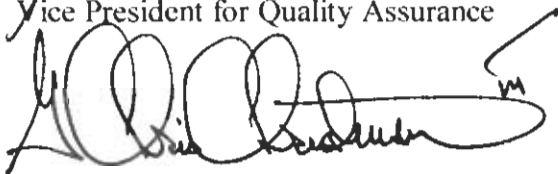
We remain committed to excellence in patient care at Abington Memorial Hospital and strive to learn from outcome analyses in an effort to improve evidence based medicine systems of care.

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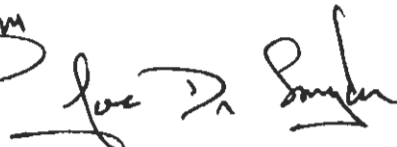
Sincerely,



Gary Candia, PhD.
Vice President for Quality Assurance



Richard Snyder, M.D.
Medical Director of Hallowell Critical Care Units



James B. McClurken, M.D.
Chief, Division of Thoracic Surgery