

October 13, 2003

Marc P. Volavka, Executive Director  
Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council  
225 Market Street, Suite 4001  
Harrisburg, PA 17101

Dear Mr. Volavka,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the 2001-2002 PHC4 Report.

Specifically, St. Joseph's Hospital would like to respond to DRG 205. As reported, three of the twelve cases resulted in mortality. All twelve cases presented with severe co-morbidities. Of the three cases resulting in death, one was a patient with acute viral hepatitis with hepatic encephalopathy and liver failure. A family member ordered a DNR upon admission to the Emergency Department. The second case involved a patient with chronic viral hepatitis B and C, hepatic failure and liver cirrhosis. The last case, a patient with hepatitis, ascites and metabolic encephalopathy, was sent to the Medical Examiner to determine the cause of death. The remainder of the patients, nine in all, who presented to St. Joseph's Hospital with similar severity scores under DRG 205, were treated and discharged.

Additionally, at St. Joseph's Hospital, Length of Stay outliers are sometimes affected by family and financial placement issues. The mission of St. Joseph's Hospital is to provide the care that is necessary to ensure the best possible outcome for patients.

We greatly appreciate PHC4 data to help us improve and provide quality care to the community.

Sincerely,



**Catherine E. Kutzler**  
Administrator/CEO

CEK/dp