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October 14, 2003

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

Re: Hospital Performance Report Formal Comment

Dear Sir:

In reviewing the information included for comment, The Washington Hospital noted a higher than expected mortality rate for Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) and Seizure & Headache, complicated. Through retrospective analysis and case review, it was observed that the patients within these diagnostic categories had multiple and severe co-morbid conditions.

The patients diagnosed with COPD for the reporting period accounted for 367 cases and 13 mortalities. Of the patients that expired, several of the patients had advanced carcinoma and were designated as "comfort measures only". All the patients within this category had various cardiac conditions with congestive heart failure being a primary influence in their responsiveness to treatment.

The patients within the category of Seizure & Headache Complicated accounted for four mortalities out of 59 cases. All four of the patients experienced multiple co-morbid conditions with debilitation secondary to advancing carcinoma present in two out of the four mortalities.

All patients were treated timely and appropriately in relation to their advanced disease processes. Thank you for the opportunity to offer our comments and provide further insight into the information provided.

Sincerely,

Telford W. Thomas  
President and CEO