



UNIVERSITY OF  
PENNSYLVANIA  
HEALTH SYSTEM

PENN PRESBYTERIAN  
MEDICAL CENTER

**Michele M. Volpe**  
*Executive Director*

September 21, 2007

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

Dear Mr. Volavka:

On behalf of Penn Presbyterian Medical Center, we would like to thank you for the opportunity to comment on the 2006 Hospital Performance Report. We appreciate the time and effort involved in reporting information related to cost and outcomes of healthcare in Pennsylvania. After careful review of the report, we would like to provide these additional observations.

Penn Presbyterian Medical Center is the only hospital in Philadelphia to be selected as one of the nation's "100 Top Hospitals" for cardiovascular care by Solucient, a Thomson healthcare business. The award for cardiovascular services objectively measures performance on key criteria at the nation's top-performing acute-care hospitals. This is the fifth year in a row that Penn Presbyterian has been recognized with this honor. In addition, we maintain the second highest case mix index in the city to further support the severity of the population we serve.

We would like to respond to the congestive heart failure (CHF) mortality ratings that were marked as significantly higher than expected. Because of our top performing cardiovascular service, patients are transferred to Penn Presbyterian Medical Center for advanced diagnostic and interventional management of complex, high-risk medical conditions.

A thorough review of these congestive heart failure (CHF) mortality cases was conducted. Forty-one percent of the patients identified in the report were transfers from other institutions for cardiovascular expertise available at Penn Presbyterian Hospital. Ninety-one percent of the total patient population was admitted emergently with 64% having the most extreme severity of illness and 91% having a high mortality risk on admission. These patients expired despite intensive medical care. All patients had multiple chronic and acute co-morbidities refractory to therapy, which contributed to the complexity of care and to the high-risk nature of the population.

We continuously review the quality of patient care at Penn Presbyterian Medical Center for improvement opportunities. Thank you for the inclusion of this information with the published report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Michele Volpe".

Michele Volpe  
Executive Director