



**ALLEGHENY  
GENERAL HOSPITAL**

WEST PENN ALLEGHENY HEALTH SYSTEM

320 EAST NORTH AVENUE, PITTSBURGH, PA 15212-4772

412-359-3131

April 20, 2011

Joseph Martin, Executive Director  
Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council  
225 Market St, Suite 400  
Harrisburg, PA 17101

Dear Mr. Martin:

Allegheny General Hospital would like to thank the Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council for the invitation to review and comment on the results of the calendar year 2008 / 2009 report on coronary artery bypass and cardiac valve surgery. The Department of Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery at Allegheny has participated in this effort for over 20 years and has always benefited from the Council's dedicated support and the opportunity for thoughtful discussions with the members of the AGH Clinical Effectiveness group.

We value our close working relationship with the PHC4 in our process improvement initiatives, including the PHC4 Open Heart Project. As active participants in regional and national outcomes projects, including the STS National Database, the Leapfrog Group and the CMS SCIP Project, we support the efforts of the PHC4 to inform and educate the public on issues affecting healthcare delivery.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on this important, ongoing process. We remain committed to our productive relationship with the Council on this and future projects.

Sincerely,

Thomas D. Maher, M.D.  
Director, Surgical Outcomes  
Department of Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery

Duke Rupert  
Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer

cc: Gregory Burfitt, President & CEO, AGH & WPH  
George Magovern, Jr., M.D., System Chairman, Dept. of Thoracic & Cardiovascular Surgery