

TRI-COUNTY ORTHOPAEDICS

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ORTHOPAEDIC SURGERY • SPORTS MEDICINE • TOTAL JOINT REPLACEMENT

May 02, 2005

Mark Volavka
Executive Director
Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Council
225 Market Street
Suite 400
Harrisburg, PA 17101

RE: MARK VOLAVKA

Dear Mr. Volavka,

I would like to take this opportunity to share with you my thoughts on the recent total joint replacement statistics. I certainly do know that statistics are statistics and that statistics do not lie. However there are certain variables that I do not believe are taken into account and are not "shown" in my personal numbers.

The statistical area where I am "worse than expected" I do not feel are justified by simple statistical means. Out of the 6 "re-admissions" 5 of them were not directly orthopedically related. In fact 2 out of the 6 were not readmitted until close to 1 month postoperative. It is certainly true that the re-admission physician was myself, which is what is reflected in the numbers, however the complications were anything but orthopaedic.

The complications which necessitated re-admissions were of intra-abdominal origin or neurologic origin in 5 out of those 6 listings. Obviously if the number was brought down to truly 1 rather than 6 of the total, it would drastically alter that same statistic. This would certainly push me into the as expected or even lower-than-expected range.

Your statistics also do not take into account an overall scope of practice. It is certainly very normal for the new partner to take on some of the higher risk cases. These much more often than not involve patients that have either more medical problems or a problem that is not your garden variety joint replacement. The patient's also by nature of their history or problem have an inherent higher risk for complications.

There is also one other point that I would like to make. Had I not been a physician that did closely follow up my patients, and obviously care about them, the re-admissions would have been to their

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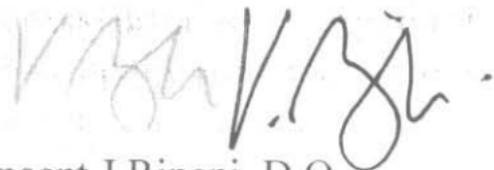
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primary care physician. So I guess if I really wanted to make my statistics better, I could have simply passed the patient's off to another physician making sure that my numbers look good.

If I can be of any further assistance please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "V. Ripepi". The signature is stylized and somewhat cursive.

Vincent J Ripepi, D.O.

VJR/ds

Dictated but not reviewed.