



Chestnut Hill Hospital

Affiliated with the University of Pennsylvania Health System

October 15, 2003

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

Dear Mr. Volavka,

We are writing to respond to two findings for the Chestnut Hill Hospital (CHH) in the PHC4 Performance Report for 2002.

CHH was noted as having a significantly higher than expected mortality rate for Aspiration Pneumonia. In 2002, based on internal monitoring, this condition was identified for focused review by the CHH department of medicine performance improvement team and quality management staff. The intensive review revealed that 80% of the patients were transferred to CHH from nursing homes and many had a prior history of stroke as well as pneumonitis. 88% were DNR/comfort measures/hospice for whom no attempt at aggressive treatment was made. Internal data also shows an overall average admission severity of 3.0 and the average age of 80 years. The average admission severity of those patients who expired was 3.1 with the average age of 83 years.

It is a well-known fact that there is a much higher mortality rate for the elderly 80 plus years relative to those age 65 to 75. Patients who are 80 plus years represent CHH's fastest growing age segment.

The CHH team identified the following opportunities for improvement: 1) review best practice approaches for diagnosing/managing aspiration pneumonia and 2) review documentation to ensure accuracy of ICD-9 coding. In early January 2003, the department of medicine sponsored a medical grand rounds lecture addressing aspiration pneumonia. We are committed to identifying best practice approaches for treating aspiration pneumonia and to developing protocols, order sets, plan of care, etc. to better manage these patients. Ongoing monitoring, education and performance improvement activities are CHH priorities.

CHH was noted as having a higher than expected mortality for kidney stones complication or comorbid condition, DRG 323. This represented one death in fifteen cases. CHH monitors all post-operative events.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the report.

Cary W. Leptuck
President and
Chief Executive Officer

Sincerely,

Robert Gillesby, MD
Executive VP and
Chief Medical Officer

Chestnut Hill HealthCare offers a full range of health care services through its physicians, community programs, Chestnut Hill Hospital, Chestnut Hill Rehabilitation Hospital, Springfield Residence and partnerships with other organizations.
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