



**FORBES
REGIONAL HOSPITAL**

WEST PENN ALLEGHENY HEALTH SYSTEM

2570 HAYMAKER ROAD, MONROEVILLE, PA 15146

412-858-2000

October 8, 2003

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

Dear Mr. Volavka:

Forbes Regional Hospital would like to thank the Pennsylvania Health Care cost Containment Council (PHC4) for providing the opportunity to comment on the results of the 2002 Hospital Performance Report. Through our continuous efforts to enhance performance improvement initiatives, we utilize this information in conjunction with supplemental data to monitor, and continuously improve, the quality of our patient care.

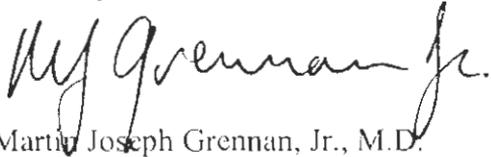
In the Hospital Performance Report, it appears that, Forbes Regional Hospital has an outlier with the Long Length of Stay for patients with Infectious Pneumonia. Upon review of the records, no trend was identified which would lead to a statistically significant long length of stay. Instead, each case had specific issues such as the choice of a skilled nursing facility or the presence of co-morbid conditions.

While DRG-specific benchmarks to predict length of stay do exist, the issue of length of stay is very patient, physician and often, family-specific. The process of discharge planning actually begins at the time the patient is admitted to our facility. This process involves Clinical Care Coordinators, Social Services, nurses, members of the Medical Staff involved in the patient's care, and to a large extent, the patient and his/her family. This multi-disciplinary team assesses the **patient's readiness** for discharge or transfer to another level of care on a daily basis.

Forbes monitors length of stay outliers on a regular basis and works with any physician who may have a statistically significant trend. This process is part of an overall Peer Review program which ensures the continuous improvement of the quality of care we provide to our patients.

In summary, we appreciate the efforts of the Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council in taking a lead role in comparing hospital performance, and we will continue to improve the quality of patient care at Forbes Regional Hospital.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. J. Grennan Jr.", written in a cursive style.

Martin Joseph Grennan, Jr., M.D.
Vice President, Clinical Quality and Resource Management

cc: Thomas J. Senker, CEO
Robert Crossey, D.O., Medical Staff President