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Allentown, PA 18105-1556



October 14, 2003

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

Dear Mr. Volavka:

We appreciate the opportunity to be able to submit comments regarding the soon-to-be-released 2003 Hospital Performance Report and applaud the Council for its ongoing efforts to inform the public of performance outcomes.

The Performance Report indicated that Lehigh Valley Hospital's mortality rating was greater than expected for "Poisoning & Total Effect of Drugs." Upon review of the 5 mortalities, three were DNR on admission, one patient had End Stage Renal Disease who had been abusing alcohol and pain medication and another died as a result of an intentional overdose.

The report also reflects a greater than expected mortality rate for "Open Gall Bladder Removal." Upon review of the three mortalities, two of these patients were Severity Group 3 on admission and the other patient underwent an open cholecystectomy and right nephrectomy for Renal Cancer. The patient succumbed due to cardiac complications.

Again, we thank you for the opportunity to comment to this report. Any questions please do not hesitate to contact me at (610) 402-1770.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Zubina Mawji". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Zubina M. Mawji, MD, MPH, FACP  
Senior Vice President  
Quality and Care Management