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October 13, 2003

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

Dear Mr. Volavka:

The following are the comments submitted on behalf of Monongahela Valley Hospital, Inc. in response to the release of The Hospital Performance Report for Federal Fiscal Year 2002 data.

The Hospital was identified as having a statistically significant high mortality rate in two (2) areas: Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) and Poisoning and Toxic Effects of Drugs.

In regards to the COPD findings, the Hospital treated 314 patients with this condition and nine (9) patients died. The average age of those patients that died was 79 years old. These patients had previous/additional medical conditions which included congestive heart failure, cancer, previous heart attack, diabetes, chronic renal failure and chronic anemia. Eight (8) of the nine (9) patients had Do Not Resuscitate orders signed by the patient or significant other due to the overall poor health condition of the patient.

Review was also conducted of the deaths that occurred in DRG 449, Poisoning and Toxic Effects of Drugs. The Hospital treated 49 patients with this condition and two (2) patients died. Both patients were admitted in critical condition in a coma with respiratory/cardiac arrest. Both patients were admitted due to drug overdoses; one from an opioid overdose and one with an overdose of psychotropic medications. Both patients suffered significant brain damage and despite aggressive medical treatment both patients died from the drug overdose taken prior to their hospital admission.

The Hospital has an effective Performance Improvement program and all of these cases were reviewed as part of that program. Following review, no areas of concern were identified.

The Hospital's mission is to enhance the health of the residents of the mid-Mon Valley and the Hospital continues its commitment to provide our community with the highest quality care to meet their health care needs.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Donna Ramusivich".

Donna L. Ramusivich
Senior Vice President

DLR:kq