



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:

Thank you for the opportunity to participate and comment on the 2002 Hospital Performance Report. Shamokin Area Community Hospital is committed to high quality healthcare and the report reveals that overall our hospital compares favorably with other hospitals statewide. However, we feel compelled to provide some insight on higher than expected mortality rate for DRG's 014 and 89.

The higher than expected mortality rate for patients in DRG 014, Stroke-Hemorrhagic, reflects the high severity of illness of that patient population coupled with a statistically low sample size for that DRG (10). Forty percent of the patients had massive to large hemorrhage with herniation associated with their illness. The average age of the patient was 82.8. Additionally, one patient was a DNR and one patient suffered cardiac arrest prior to admission. Based on medical staff review, overall, a number of the patients had been determined to have a poor prognosis.

The higher than expected mortality rate for patients in DRG 89, Pneumonia-Infectious, also reflects the high severity of illness in our patient population. Seventy-five percent of the patients had presented from skilled nursing facilities. The average age of our patients was 85 and a number of the patients had extreme co-morbid conditions such as renal failure, diabetes, chronic anemia, cancer, progressed Alzheimer's, status post-hip fracture and recent MI's. In spite of the fact that a majority of the patients had double antibiotic coverage, these pre-existing conditions contributed to a higher than expected mortality rate for this DRG.

Thank you, again, for allowing us the opportunity to comment on this data.

Sincerely,

Purshottam N. Patel, M.D.
Chairman, Utilization Management/Medical Records Committee