



HERITAGE VALLEY

Health System

Sewickley Valley Hospital • The Medical Center

1000 Dutch Ridge Road
Beaver, Pennsylvania
15009-9700

September 14, 2004

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

Dear Mr. Volavka:

The Medical Center of Beaver, Pennsylvania recognizes the commitment and effort of the Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council in the publication of the 2003 Hospital Performance Report. We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the performance report.

Within the published report, the mortality information indicates that The Medical Center performs within the expected mortality rates in 46 of the 48 clinical conditions and/or DRGs. The Medical Center, as part of our ongoing performance, reviews each mortality, and if indicated forwards the case to a physician for an independent objective review. This review is performed to assess whether or not care is consistent with current evidenced based medicine and to support the learning and ongoing performance improvement culture within our organization. The Medical Center actual mortality exceeded the expected mortality for aspiration pneumonia and non-hemorrhagic stroke. No areas of deficiency or untoward trends were identified within these clinical areas.

In regards to readmissions and long LOS outliers, The Medical Center within the past year has embraced Six Sigma methodology as a way of doing and improving business. Three clinical areas; heart failure, pneumonia and COPD, have been selected as six sigma projects in order to better understand the processes that lead to a long LOS or readmission and then subsequently implement strategies to reduce its occurrence.

Again, we appreciate and support the Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council 2003 Performance Report and will continue to use this information in our ongoing efforts to improve the quality of care for the community we service.

Sincerely,

Daniel H. Brooks, M.D.
Vice President & Chief Medical Officer
Heritage Valley Health System