



Quality & Care Management
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September 20, 2006

Via Facsimile – 717-232-3821
Confirmation will be sent by Federal Express

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

Dear Mr. Volavka:

We appreciate the opportunity to be able to submit comments regarding the soon-to-be released 2005 Hospital Performance Report and applaud the Council for its ongoing efforts to inform the public of performance outcomes on these common medical procedures.

The performance report indicated that Lehigh Valley Hospital – Muhlenberg's mortality rating was greater than expected for Septicemia. Upon review of these cases, we would like to make two comments:

1. 55% of the patients died within 48 hours of admission having presented with overwhelming sepsis and multiple organ failure.
2. All of the patients requested "Comfort Measures" or "No Resuscitation".

As part of our ongoing peer review process, all mortalities are reviewed and no quality concerns were identified.

The performance report indicated that Lehigh Valley Hospital – Muhlenberg's readmission rate for complications/infections for DRG205 Liver Disease was greater than expected. Upon review of the cases, the three patients readmitted to our facility were readmitted from skilled nursing facilities and had end stage liver disease with recurring hepatic encephalopathy.

The performance report indicated that Lehigh Valley Hospital – Muhlenberg's readmission rate for complications/infection for DRG096 Bronchitis and Asthma, Complicated was greater than expected. Upon review of the cases, only two patients were readmitted to our facility. The first was an 83-year-old female with influenza and community acquired pneumonia readmitted due to failure to thrive with inability to care for herself at home. The second was a 32-year-old patient with asthma and non-compliant with medications.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Ardore, MD'.

Anthony Ardore MD, MPH, CPE
Senior Vice President
Quality and Patient Safety