



Hazleton General Hospital

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September 16, 2010

Joseph Martin
Executive Director
Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council
225 Market St.
Suite 400
Harrisburg, PA 17101

Dear Mr. Martin:

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to this year's report.

We are very pleased with the results of the data presented to us by the Health Care Cost Containment Council. We have a very aggressive team approach to quality improvement, which has been very successful.

This year's data contains a few areas of focus, mainly in the length-of-stay and readmission categories. We have a number of internal teams that concentrate on core measures and clinical appropriateness of hospital stays.

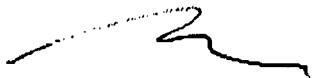
In addition to our internal teams, we also participate in numerous external projects, including projects with our state QIO. For example, we have been recognized for our efforts in reducing heart failure admissions through our participation in the Accelerating Best Care performance improvement program. We are actively involved with the American Heart Association's "Get with the Guidelines" program, and have received awards for excellence in the care of the heart failure and stroke patients. We are a Primary Stroke Center of Excellence through our accrediting body, HFAP. During our most recent survey, we received "Superior Recognition" for our quality performance improvement data. We are also a Bariatric Center of Excellence through the Surgical Review Organization. We are presently pursuing certification to become a chest pain center of excellence, as well.

This year, our organization has been involved in an initiative to improve our clinical documentation. As you know, the statistics in your report are risk-adjusted using our case mix index calculations, which are driven by our internal documentation. By using the most specific terminology when documenting, our case mix index will more accurately reflect the severity of illness in our patient population, thus improving the accuracy of your statistics as well.

Our *heart* is in healthcare.

Our commitment to providing cost-effective, quality health care to our community drives our corporate vision. We look forward to your reports for use as benchmarks in our continuing quality improvement projects.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Barbara A. Vilushis'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent loop at the end.

Barbara A. Vilushis, DO
Associate Medical Director, GHHA