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September 16, 2010

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

Dear Mr. Martin:

We appreciate the opportunity to be able to submit comments regarding the FFY 2009 Hospital Performance Report and applaud the Council for its ongoing efforts to inform the public of performance outcomes on the code-based conditions/procedures.

Upon review of the readmissions for complications or infection throughout the Lehigh Valley Health Network, we observed that several of the readmissions were unrelated to the primary diagnosis of the patients' previous admissions. In addition, LVHN has recently completed participation in the Institute for Healthcare Improvement's national collaborative to reduce readmissions. While our focus was to reduce readmissions for patients with heart failure, we will spread our successful tools and actions to all patients, including those with COPD throughout the Network.

The performance report indicated that Lehigh Valley Hospital – Muhlenberg had a significantly higher than expected mortality rate for medical management of patients with diabetes. Our mortality rate was 4 with the expected range being 0-3. Upon physician review of the four identified cases, their findings confirmed that death was either anticipated or was not reasonably preventable by medical intervention in each of these cases.

Again, we thank you for the opportunity to comment on this report. Any questions please do not hesitate to contact me at 610-402-8656.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ardire, (M)" in a cursive, slightly slanted script.

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