

UPMC Altoona

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

Dear Mr. Martin:

UPMC Altoona appreciates the opportunity to review the Hospital Performance Report for 2012. We are proud that our readmissions for CHF patients are better than expected. All other readmission rates are as expected. For mortality, there are three (3) areas that were rated as "higher than expected." These areas are "Kidney and Urinary Tract Infections," "Pneumonia-Aspiration" and "Septicemia."

We review all mortalities and complications through a robust Peer Review process. These individual cases have been further reviewed and no specific quality issues were uncovered.

Many of the patients on this list have multiple comorbidities such as extensive malignancies, ages greater than 90 years old and other end stage diagnoses. Many of our patients and their families have made the decision to have comfort measures only and these patients stayed in the acute side of the hospital for this care.

For example, in the patient group "Kidney and Urinary Tract Infections," all the patients with an in-hospital mortality selected "comfort measures only." One was greater than 100 years old, two (2) had metastatic cancer and one (1) had a large previous stroke.

We, at UPMC Altoona, appreciate the data that you have made available so that we can benchmark against others and continue to improve our quality processes.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond.

Sincerely,



Linnane R. Batzel, M.D., MBA
Senior VP, Quality/Medical Affairs
Chief Medical Officer
UPMC Altoona

LRB/bac