

December 16, 2010

Merry Holliday-Hanson, Ph.D., Manager
Administrative Data Program
Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development
400 R Street, Room 250
Sacramento, CA 95811

SUBJECT: Torrance Memorial Response to OSHPD Public Release of AHRQ Hospital Inpatient Mortality Indicators, 2008 and 2009

Dear Merry Holliday-Hanson:

In the OSHPD Public Release of 2008 and 2009 Hospital Inpatient Mortality Indicators, Torrance Memorial was identified as having a "worse than expected" congestive heart failure mortality rate for 2008. Careful review of all of these cases revealed no quality of care issues.

The expected rate of mortality is calculated based on patients' risk factors. It is a complicated process, which requires precise documentation of all aspects of a patients' illness. The review found that some of these patients had significant medical conditions that were not clearly documented in the medical record. Therefore, their calculated risk of mortality was less than it should have been, resulting in a higher than expected mortality rate.

In September of 2008 clinical documentation specialists were hired and a clinical documentation program was initiated to improve the accuracy of documentation and to ensure that all aspects of a patient's illness are reflected in the medical record. We believe these efforts have been successful as demonstrated by the fact that our 2009 mortality rate for congestive heart failure was "as expected".

Sincerely,



John McNamara MD, FACS, Chief Medical Officer / Senior Vice President