



CHARTER

■ SEPSIS AS A PUBLIC HEALTH THREAT IN MASSACHUSETTS

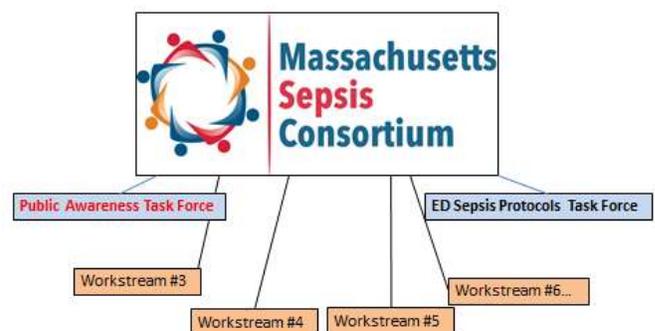
Sepsis is a medical emergency caused by the body's overwhelming and life-threatening response to infection, which can lead to tissue damage, organ failure, and death. The many risk factors for a person's development and progression of sepsis include advanced age, compromised immune system response, chronic illness, broad spectrum antibiotic use, and exposure to infection associated with surgical and invasive procedures. Although early detection and management can significantly improve patient outcomes, sepsis can be difficult to predict, diagnose, and treat.

Data on the incidence of sepsis in the Commonwealth is fragmented, but establishes sepsis as a major burden on the health care system and on patients and families. An analysis of Massachusetts claims data has found that septicemia and disseminated infections represent 4.1% of all hospital admissions statewide—making these conditions the leading cause of hospitalization after labor and newborn delivery. People who contract sepsis face prolonged, costly treatment and the risk of lasting injury and death. While it is unclear whether the rate of sepsis has grown in recent years, the sheer number of Massachusetts residents affected by sepsis and the human and economic cost of sepsis points to the need for a strong public health response.

■ PURPOSE AND ROLE OF THE MASSACHUSETTS SEPSIS CONSORTIUM

The Massachusetts Sepsis Consortium brings together a group of organizations essential to planning and executing an effective public health response to sepsis. It also provides ongoing strategic direction for statewide initiatives to improve the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of sepsis, and supplies the administrative backbone necessary to sustain progress. The consortium model is well-suited to addressing multifaceted, persistent challenges like sepsis that require the focus of dispersed parties with expertise and authority but whose impact would be limited if acting alone.

Because the challenges associated with sepsis are numerous and complex, we envision a longer term, systematic effort that will be carried out in phases over a period of several years. The Consortium will lead off with a planning process to frame the issues and set



priorities based upon urgency and potential for impact—with a particular emphasis on issues that will derive the greatest benefit from a coordinated approach or diffusion of best practices. This process will result in a “roadmap” for action on a set of work streams. We anticipate that the Consortium’s work will look beyond regulatory approaches toward identification and broad dissemination of quality and safety improvement strategies combined with activities that support implementation.

The Consortium will advance each work stream by coordinating a series of activities such as expert panels, education efforts, and work groups charged with generating evidence-based, actionable tools to address specific needs.

Finally, the Consortium will develop a comprehensive communications strategy to disseminate the guidance and tools generated by its work and promote implementation. One element of that strategy will be the creation of an online clearinghouse, maintained by the Betsy Lehman Center, of a curated set of practical sepsis resources.

■ MISSION OF THE CONSORTIUM

The Massachusetts Sepsis Consortium is a collaboration of health care providers, payers, researchers, patients, state agencies, and policymakers that plans and oversees a series of targeted initiatives to improve public health by preventing sepsis and improving the early detection and treatment of sepsis, reducing the impact of this deadly condition on patients, families, and the health care system in the Commonwealth.

■ GOALS OF THE CONSORTIUM

- Increase public awareness about sepsis prevention, symptoms and when to seek medical care
- Increase provider awareness of sepsis to prevent missed or delayed diagnosis of sepsis
- Improve prompt diagnosis and initiation of treatment in all medical settings, but particularly in “front door” settings such as emergency departments and urgent care clinics
- Improve reporting and monitoring of sepsis cases
- Prevent healthcare acquired infections (HAIs) that can lead to sepsis
- Support work that promotes appropriate prescribing of antibiotics

■ COMPOSITION AND FUNCTION OF THE CONSORTIUM

Membership: The consortium initially will include representatives from the following sectors:

State Agencies and Legislators

- Executive Office of Health and Human Services
- Betsy Lehman Center for Patient Safety
- Board of Registration in Medicine, Quality and Patient Safety Division
- Center for Health Information and Analysis
- Department of Public Health
- Health Policy Commission
- MassHealth
- Rep. Kate Hogan
- Sen. Jason Lewis
- Sen. Mark Montigny

Health Care Associations and Insurers

- Blue Cross Blue Shield of MA
- CRICO
- Coverys
- Healthcentric Advisors
- Home Care Alliance of Massachusetts
- Massachusetts Association of Health Plans
- Massachusetts Coalition for the Prevention of Medical Errors
- Massachusetts Emergency Nurses Association
- Massachusetts Health and Hospital Association
- Massachusetts Home Care
- Massachusetts Infectious Disease Society
- Massachusetts Medical Society
- Massachusetts Senior Care Association
- Society of Critical Care Medicine
- Steward Health Care

Sepsis Advocates and Patient Representatives

- National Family Council on Sepsis
- Rory Staunton Foundation
- Sepsis Alliance

Time commitment: Consortium members will be expected to participate in monthly meetings during the initial six month planning period, during which the group will develop a roadmap and launch the first series of work streams. The meeting schedule and time commitment after the planning phase will depend upon the future plans as defined by the group.

Management: The Betsy Lehman Center will administer and provide the infrastructure necessary to support the work of the Consortium.