



Public Health
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Frederick County Health Department

SENATE BILL 332
Hospitals and Urgent Care Centers – Sepsis protocol (Lochlin’s Law)
ORAL TESTIMONY BEFORE THE
Finance Committee
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Position: Support – February 15, 2024

The bill would require each hospital and urgent care center to implement protocols for the early recognition and treatment of a patient with sepsis, conduct periodic training in the implementation of the protocols, and collect and use quality measures.

The Department of Legislative Service’s analysis listed the statewide initiatives from 2018 (focused education) and 2015 (a 21 hospital collaborative to reduce mortality). The analysis reported that the 2015 Sepsis Hospital Collaborative reduced the sepsis mortality rate by 25%, saving more than 550 lives.

The components of this bill are the next reasonable step in responding to stalled improvements observed from the prior statewide initiatives. Public education is a key component of a multi-pronged approach, but effective public health strategies are more often those that are focused on the systems and people who are more likely to encounter the undesirable condition, in this case, sepsis, rather than the entire general public population.

Sepsis is the body’s extreme response to an infection. It is a life-threatening medical emergency. Sepsis happens when an infection you already have triggers a chain reaction throughout your body. Without timely treatment, sepsis can rapidly lead to tissue damage, organ failure, and death. The local data that is publicly available is for septicemia, defined as a serious bacterial infection (aka “blood poisoning”) with three primary complications – sepsis, septic shock, and acute respiratory distress syndrome.

In Maryland septicemia was the 9th leading cause of death in 2021. The 2021 age-adjusted mortality rate in Maryland is higher than that of the US rate, 12.1 per 100,000 population compared to 10.2 per 100,000 population. The reduction in mortality rate observed from 2014 to 2016 appears to have stalled since 2016. Racial disparities are evident in Maryland as Black men die at greater rates (18.9) than Black women (14.3) and White men (12.2) and women (11.1). In Frederick County, 38 people died of septicemia in 2021, **more than** chronic liver disease and cirrhosis (33), suicide (33), breast cancer (22), or motor vehicle accidents (18). Deaths from septicemia most commonly occur in adults over 55 years, but **can occur at any age**. In 2021, in the whole state, 3 children under a year of age died from septicemia.

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