**MEDIA ADVISORY**

**Suspect Sepsis. Save Lives. Campaign Launches Sept. 15 to Raise Awareness About Deadly Condition**

12,000 Coloradoans get sepsis and 3,000 die each year; September is Sepsis Awareness Month

**What: Although it is a leading cause of hospital deaths, sepsis is unknown to most Americans. That’s why clinicians, patient safety advocates, state officials and sepsis survivors will gather at University of Colorado Hospital on September 15 to launch a statewide effort to save lives. Organized by the** national non-profit Sepsis Alliance, [**Suspect Sepsis. Save Lives**](http://www.suspectsepsis.org)**.** is a Colorado campaign to educate the public and health care providers that rapid recognition and response can cut sepsis deaths in half.

Speakers will discuss:

* The incidence of sepsis in Colorado and who it affects;
* The cost of sepsis to Colorado;
* How hospitals can improve efforts to rapidly detect and treat sepsis;
* Why sepsis has been an “unknown” condition until recently;
* What patients and citizens can do to quickly identify sepsis; and

Sepsis survivor Pamela Popp of Denver will also share her story. “I didn’t lose my limbs, or my life, as so many sepsis patients do,” she said. “Every day I am grateful that I survived. And I believe that I survived so that I could tell the story of what it is like to go through this.”

**When: Monday**, September 15 from 12:00pm-1:00pm

**Where:** University of Colorado Hospital main entrance, 12605 E. 16th Avenue, Aurora, Colo.

**Who:** Speakers include:

* Sepsis survivor Pamela Popp
* Richard Zane, MD, Chair, Department of Emergency Medicine, University of Colorado Hospital
* Judy Zerzan, MD, MPH, Chief Medical Officer, Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing
* Tom Heymann, Executive Director, Sepsis Alliance
* State Representative Spencer Swalm

**Suspect Sepsis. Save Lives.**, is sponsored by [Sepsis Alliance](http://www.sepsisalliance.org), a nonprofit advocacy group dedicated to raising awareness about sepsis, in collaboration with [MSC](http://www.medsimulation.com), a Colorado company that helps hospitals improve patient safety. The campaign includes a statewide bus tour, public relations, a website and a story gathering campaign. Campaign partners include UC Health, Citizens for Patient Safety and the Association of Registered periOperative Nurses (AORN). For more information about the signs of sepsis and how you can join the movement to reduce sepsis-related deaths, visit <http://www.suspectsepsis.org.>

**About Sepsis:**

Sepsis is a life-threatening condition that arises when the body’s response to infection injures its own tissues and organs. Sepsis can result from any infection, such as a urinary tract infection, meningitis, pneumonia, appendicitis or even a simple cut on the hand. Sometimes called “blood poisoning,” sepsis is a medical emergency that requires early detection and treatment for patients to survive. While the best way to prevent sepsis is to prevent infection, complications from sepsis are greatly reduced if patients quickly identify the condition and seek medical treatment immediately.

Until recently, sepsis was not considered an isolated condition; rather the illness was confounded with the underlying infection. However, as the incidence of sepsis has climbed in the United States over the past decade, so too has the awareness of sepsis as a distinct medical condition. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s National Center for Health Statistics estimates that, based upon information collected for billing purposes, the number of times people were in the hospital with sepsis increased from 621,000 in the year 2000 to 1,141,000 in 2008. In response to this trend, this year the CDC dedicated a new area on its website to sepsis.

Sepsis can affect anyone, but people at greatest risk are those with weakened immune systems; the elderly; infants and children; or people with chronic illnesses. It the third leading cause of death in the United States, after heart attack and cancer. In Colorado, 12,000 people will be diagnosed with sepsis this year and 3,000 people will die from the condition. Unfortunately, a 2014 Harris survey conducted by Sepsis Alliance showed that only 44 percent of Americans have ever heard of sepsis.

**About Suspect Sepsis. Save Lives.**

The campaign urges the public to:

* Learn the signs of sepsis;
* Tell their nurse, doctor or emergency room provider, “I am concerned about sepsis;” and
* Make a difference by telling others their stories.

To identify sepsis, look for any and all symptoms:

* Fever
* Hypothermia
* Heart rate greater than 90 beats per minute
* Fast respiratory rate
* Altered mental status (confusion/coma)
* Swelling
* High blood glucose without diabetes
* Feeling worse than you ever felt before

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