



Team effort saving lives

Severe sepsis and septic shock claim the lives of approximately 20 percent and 40 percent respectively of those afflicted. Immediate action is required since mortality is increased 8 percent per hour that antibiotic treatment is delayed.

In addition to antibiotics, numerous other lab and imaging studies are required along with a focus on stabilizing the patient's vital signs with large volumes of fluids, often with other medications that help with management of dangerously low blood pressure.

Last year, Via Christi formed a dedicated Sepsis Team in Wichita to transform the care of patients with the most common deadly disease faced in our community.

The team is led by Howard Chang, MD, medical director for Emergency Services; infectious disease specialists Maggie Hagan, MD, and Maha Assi, MD; Jim Garrelts, senior director of Pharmacy; Pam Albright, RN, and Jackie Carnahan, RN, nurse managers in the Emergency Department; and Nancy Koftan and Diana Chipas, RN, who serve in Patient Safety and Quality.

Working with their bedside teammates, the team's efforts have led to a remarkable reduction in severe sepsis and septic shock mortality to a level 60 percent lower than the national average—and is estimated to have saved more than 70 lives in the past year alone.

“It's a great example of how working together across all departments we can make improvements that reduces harm to our patients and serves as a model for ministries across Ascension,” said Carla Yost, system chief nursing officer.

Keep up the great work!

Kudos for great care

Sometimes care compliments are specific to one or more individuals.

In the case of the Senior Behavioral Unit on 6W at Via Christi Hospital St. Joseph, the family member who shared them directed them to the entire team.

Wrote the patient's daughter: “This team provides miracles! Their patience, kindness, attentiveness and professionalism is unmatched. Thank you for saving my mother.

“It's been a long road and your nurses made it bearable and possible. Thank you to the whole team!”