Women & Children’s Hospital of Buffalo Debuts “Stop Septic Shock” Initiative

Women & Children’s Hospital of Buffalo (WCHOB) is launching a comprehensive, multi-faceted program to combat severe sepsis and septic shock in the children of Western New York. These are diagnoses whose devastating impacts persist despite the efforts of regional, national and international collaborations. At this time, the medical community still knows relatively little about the best ways to offset the burden of morbidity and mortality that sepsis often leaves in its wake.

Recent Department of Health legislation commits all New York hospitals to serial reports on all septic patients, documenting outcomes data and institutional compliance with recognized treatment bundles and algorithms. The gravity and the implications of this mandate cannot be overemphasized. Clearly, several decades’ worth of research and collaborative efforts have not done enough to alleviate the sequelae of severe sepsis in the communities we serve.

This strong external impetus, coupled with the energies of numerous internal parties, has given rise to the WCHOB “Stop Septic Shock” initiative. Simply stated, its mission is to improve the short- and long-term outcomes of our patients with sepsis through an aggressive, multidisciplinary education, intervention and compliance plan that seeks to change the “culture of sepsis” in our hospital.

A recent survey, completed by approximately 75% of the WCHOB staff, identified several modifiable obstacles to sepsis recognition and timely treatment. Input from these providers was also used to craft what will become a number of ‘sepsis drills,’ small-group simulation sessions designed to mimic the all-important “first 15 minutes” of sepsis and septic shock recognition. The “real time” nature of these sessions inherently makes them conducive to application in a range of hospital settings, without the need for large blocks of time or exorbitant staff commitments. Additionally, these sessions will allow the staff to familiarize themselves with practical usage of our severe sepsis protocol and order set. Drills will begin on all inpatient units in January 2016.

Kaleidoscope will soon feature a sepsis webpage, currently under development, which will provide immediate access to hospital performance reports, educational resources and our pediatric sepsis treatment protocols. These protocols have been revised to include the most recent recommendations from the Surviving Sepsis Campaign and the Society of Critical Care Medicine.

As an introduction to this exciting new initiative, Amanda Hassinger, MD and Ryan Breuer, MD of the division of pediatric critical care at WCHOB will hold a Grand Rounds session on January 15, 2016. This presentation will include data from our hospital’s most recent DOH sepsis reports and our internal survey, in an effort to couple performance metrics with staff perceptions to better describe our sepsis culture here at WCHOB. All are invited to attend. Only by changing this culture can we truly hope to stop septic shock.

Any questions or feedback regarding this initiative can be directed to Dr. Hassinger at ahassinger@upa.chob.edu.