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PRESS RELEASE

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JPS nets fourth top certification

Sepsis award by The Joint Commission is a public hospital first

Fort Worth, Aug. 31, 2017 — JPS Health Network has earned The Joint Commission certification in treatment of sepsis, becoming the first public hospital in the country to meet The Joint Commission standards for best-possible care. JPS is now the only public hospital in the United States to hold certifications in trauma, stroke, heart attack and sepsis, the nation's leading causes of death and disability.

“When you have these four certifications, it proves you can take care of anything that comes through the door, and can do it providing the highest quality of care,” said Lori Muhr, DNP, director of Clinical Performance Improvement and project manager for the Code Sepsis Task Force at JPS, Tarrant County's public safety-net healthcare provider.

Sepsis is a leading cause of disease-related death in the United States. Between 28 and 50 percent of people who get sepsis will die, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which says the number of cases climbed from 621,000 in 2000 to more than 1.1 million in 2008. Sepsis accounts for between 34 and 52 percent of a hospital deaths.

Often referred to as “blood poisoning,” sepsis is not itself an infection. It is a complication of infection, which could be anything from pneumonia or appendicitis to an infected wound. As the body responds to infection, the immune system releases chemicals that can trigger inflammation inside blood vessels, interfering with circulation to vital organs. Treating the underlying infection does not immediately eliminate the danger, because dying bacteria release endotoxins that cause blood pressure to drop, leading to septic shock.

The Society of Critical Care Medicine and other medical organizations launched a global Surviving Sepsis Campaign in 2002 with the goal of reducing sepsis mortality. JPS answered the call by creating a task force with representatives of all major service lines, which developed Code Sepsis to speed up diagnosis and treatment. Code Sepsis activation triggers a response from a team specially trained to recognize sepsis and start treatment. The task force also developed sepsis protocols — Code Sepsis bundles of treatment measures used by nurses when signs of sepsis appear.

The Code Sepsis project at JPS was named a 2016 Gage Award Remarkable Project by America's Essential Hospitals, recognized for reducing the mortality rate for sepsis patients from 24 percent to 13.7 percent and reducing the length of hospital stays for sepsis patients.