Kentucky Hospital Association DATA CENTER *Timely, accurate data information and resources.*

Sepsis in Kentucky

Sepsis is the body's overwhelming and life-threatening response to infection which can lead to tissue damage, organ failure and death. In the U.S. alone, sepsis affects **1.7 million people** and takes **357,000 lives every year.** However, as many as 80% of sepsis deaths could be prevented with rapid diagnosis and treatment. Costs to treat sepsis total **$62 billion annually in the U.S.**[1]

Sepsis happens when an infection you already have – in your skin, lungs, urinary tract, or somewhere else – triggers a chain reaction throughout your body. Without timely treatment, sepsis can rapidly lead to tissue damage, organ failure and death. It's important to look for a combination of the warning signs of sepsis. Spotting these symptoms early could prevent the body from developing septic shock and could save a life. Symptoms of sepsis include fever, difficulty breathing, low blood pressure, fast heart rate and mental confusion. Other symptoms may include chills, dizziness, low body temperature, shivering, delirium, and skin discoloration. Screening patients for sepsis immediately when the patient presents to the emergency department (ED) allows providers to identify and begin treatment immediately.

Kentucky hospitals are screening patients for sepsis at time of triage. Kentucky started this practice in 2022. Almost 99 percent of all ED patients are screened for sepsis, and those who screen positive recieve timely treatment.

Sepsis in Kentucky hospitals:

2020 Total Sepsis Inpatient Discharges =	36,022	Total Charges	$2,091,421,894
2021 Total Sepsis Inpatient Discharges =	35,511	Total Charges	$2,425,208,371
2022 Total Sepsis Inpatient Discharges =	35,372	Total Charges	$2,326,124,175
2023 Total Sepsis Inpatient Discharges =	37,153	Total Charges	$2,436,974,696
2024 Total Sepsis Inpatient Discharges =	38,811	Total Charges	$2,622,062,253
2025 Total Sepsis Inpatient Discharges =	40,564	Total Charges	$2,811,498,895

Sepsis Unspecified Organism principal diagnosis ranks the highest in the number of inpatient discharges and first in total charges.

Number of 2025 inpatient days for sepsis patients:

Average Sepsis Inpatient Length of Stay	6.16 days
Average Inpatient length of Stay	5.82 days
Total Number of Days	249,703

2025 Race of Sepsis Patients:

Caucasian	91.9%
African American	6.5%
Other Races	1.6%

2025 Payer Distribution:

Medicare	26,140 (64.4%)
Medicaid (including Medicaid Managed Care)	7,499 (18.5%)
Commercial	4,871 (12.0%)
Other	1,370 (3.4%)
Self-Pay & Charity	684 (1.7%)

2025 Gender of Sepsis Patients:

Women	21,336 (52.6%)
Men	19,228 (47.4%)

Data Source: *KHA InfoSuite*

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2025 Age Range of Sepsis Patients:

Age 0-5 236	**Age 18-24 ..... 481**	**Age 35-44 .... 2,324**	**Age 55-64 .... 7,542**	**Age 75-84 .... 9,295**
Age 6-17 132	**Age 25-34 .... 1,242**	**Age 45-54 .... 4,162**	**Age 65-74 .. 10,837**	**Age 85 +..... 4,313**

Data Source: *KHA InfoSuite*

While sepsis predominantly affects older adults, 59% are age 65 and older in Kentucky, it also affects younger adults and children. Sepsis can have devastating consequences for children. Each year, approximately **75,000 children** develop severe sepsis in the United States alone. **More children die of sepsis than childhood cancer.**

Governor Andy Beshear again signed a proclamation officially declaring September 2026 as Sepsis Awareness Month, reaffirming the Commonwealth's recognition of the importance of continuing to raise awareness of this life-threatening disease, acknowledge survivors, and honor those who have lost their lives to sepsis.

The Kentucky Sepsis Consortium is working with Kentucky hospitals statewide to reduce the morbidity and mortality caused by sepsis. The consortium focuses on improving sepsis outcomes through collaborative learning to achieve appropriate, timely and reliable implementation of evidence-based interventions.

In early 2020, the Kentucky State Senate unanimously passed Dayo's Resolution, named after a two-time sepsis survivor. This Resolution recognizes and supports Kentucky Hospital Association's creation of the statewide sepsis consortium with the goal of reducing the incidence of and harm from sepsis through education and quality improvement for Kentucky hospitals and their communities. All Kentucky hospitals have signed a letter of commitment to participate in the program. Teams at each hospital continue to make progress in improving processes to quickly screen, identify and treat sepsis.

For more information about the **Kentucky Sepsis Consortium** and **KHA Data Center**, contact:

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[1] Sepsis Alliance. Sepsis Fact Sheet. 2026. https://www.sepsis.org/education/resources/fact-sheets/

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