



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
September 2, 2016

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**Virginia Hospitals and Nursing Homes to Target Sepsis Rates**  
*VHQC, VHHA collaborate to improve early identification and treatment*

[Richmond, VA] – A newly funded initiative is bringing together Virginia nursing homes, hospitals and health care organizations to reduce sepsis rates and improve outcomes for patients. VHQC, in partnership with the Virginia Hospital & Healthcare Association (VHHA), is enlisting 25 nursing homes and 25 hospitals to implement evidence-based interventions to improve the early detection and treatment of sepsis and other infections among older adults.

"Sepsis is a serious illness that takes the lives of more than 4,600 Virginians each year," said VHQC President and CEO Donald A. Glozer, MHA, FACHE. "This work will improve the lives of nursing home residents, and support hospitals and nursing homes as they reduce infection rates."

VHHA will engage hospital personnel at the 25 hospitals with the highest sepsis mortality rates; VHQC will provide support to the nursing homes generating the highest number of sepsis-related admissions to those hospitals. Participating facilities will receive training, tools, data analyses and consultation, and learn from the best practices of industry peers. Additionally, VHHA will create opportunities for dialogue and collaboration between Virginia hospitals and nursing homes that share sepsis reduction goals.

"Virginia's community hospitals and health systems place a high priority on health care quality and safety efforts," said VHHA President and CEO Sean T. Connaughton. "Achieving top-tier performance on those measures across Virginia's hospitals is a strategic objective articulated by VHHA's Board of Directors, which approved the creation of a Center for Healthcare Excellence in 2014. The Center works with hospitals and other stakeholders on various initiatives aimed at enhancing patient safety. Hospitals' work on this important new sepsis reduction partnership with nursing homes and other providers is a positive example of the ongoing work occurring to improve patient safety and quality outcomes."

More than a million Americans are diagnosed with sepsis every year. A syndrome in which an infection leads to systemic inflammation that damages organs and is hard to reverse, sepsis kills 25 to 50 percent of the patients it affects. Sepsis is also the leading cause of hospital admissions from U.S. nursing homes, compromising the health of frail older adults and leading to higher health care spending that could be avoided with earlier detection and treatment.

Funding for this two-year special innovation project, which totals \$445,860, was provided to VHQC by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). VHQC is CMS' Medicare Quality Innovation Network-Quality Improvement Organization (QIN-QIO) for Maryland and Virginia. Its improvement initiatives convene healthcare providers, patients and families, and stakeholder organizations for sustainable change that results in better care, healthier people and smarter health care spending.

#### *About VHQC*

*For more than 30 years, VHQC has been leading the way to better health care for providers and other clients by offering expertise in quality improvement, utilization management, analytic services and health information technology support that improves patient outcomes — and often results in cost savings. In addition to its role as the QIN-QIO, VHQC serves as the Practice Transformation Network for Virginia, Maryland, Washington, D.C. and West Virginia. Visit [www.vhqc.org](http://www.vhqc.org) to learn more.*

#### *About VHHA*

*The Virginia Hospital & Healthcare Association is an alliance of 107 hospitals and 30 health delivery systems that develops and advocates for sound health care practices and policies in the Commonwealth. Its vision is through the power of collaboration to be recognized as a driving force behind making Virginia the healthiest state in the nation. VHHA's Center for Healthcare Excellence is chartered around the aspirational vision of a Virginia health care system that delivers top-tier quality at the lowest cost; ensures a safe environment for all hospital patients, families, staff, and visitors; achieves zero harm to all patients; and always provides an optimal patient and family experience.*

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