Dear Colleague,

Sepsis affects over 1.6 million people each year, a number that has risen in recent years, and causes over 250,000 deaths annually, making it our nation’s 10th leading cause of death. I urge you to join me in sending the below letter to the Appropriations Committee asking them to address this serious health issue in the Fiscal Year 2016 Labor-Health and Human Services-Education Appropriations legislation.

The letter supports several requests that will help fight sepsis. First, the letter supports the significant new sepsis activities proposed in the Fiscal Year 2016 budget through the National Healthcare Safety Network at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The CDC has proposed using these funds to better define and detect sepsis and collect data on sepsis prevalence, in order to improve sepsis treatment strategies.

Second, the letter asks for language specifically directing the CDC to target more funds toward sepsis education and prevention by increasing public awareness efforts. Greater awareness of sepsis and its dangers will help improve early response to potential sepsis cases, allowing them to be treated sooner. For a condition where time saves lives, raising awareness can make a tremendous difference.

I hope you will join me in asking the Appropriations Committee to ensure that our public health agencies undertake a serious effort to fight this deadly disease. To sign on, please contact Nicole Cohen in my office at Nicole.cohen@mail.house.gov by March 20, 2015.

Sincerely,

Joseph Crowley
Member of Congress

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March 26, 2015

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies
House Appropriations Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies
House Appropriations Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515
Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro:

As you work to develop the Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill, we ask for your support in increasing the federal response to the critical public health problem of sepsis.

Sepsis is a condition that develops after a significant immune response to infection. In severe cases, this immune response can cause the patient’s blood pressure to drop, prompting the body to go into septic shock. This all too often leads to death.

Sepsis is the 10th leading cause of death in the United States, resulting in over 250,000 deaths each year. It affects over 1.6 million people annually, a number that has risen in recent years, and is the most expensive condition treated in U.S. hospitals. While we understand efforts have begun to improve the healthcare system’s response to sepsis and septic shock, there is more that can be done to address this public health danger, and we urge your appropriations bill to further and encourage greater efforts in fighting sepsis.

We were pleased to see that the President’s budget request for the National Healthcare Safety Network at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) would support activities to better detect sepsis, collect data, and refine sepsis treatment strategy. Building this framework will help inform future quality measures and protocol requirements, as well as provide the information needed to assess prevention and treatment approaches and better track areas in need of improvement in our approach to sepsis. Additionally, the National Healthcare Safety Network supports the Prevention EpiCenters program, which will use FY 2016 funding to prevent severe sepsis outcomes through early detection and diagnosis. The CDC has specifically targeted these sepsis activities as key areas the National Healthcare Safety Network will be able to address with an increase in funding, and we ask that the Committee support the budget request for this important program.

It is also vitally important to increase public awareness and education efforts around sepsis, because that is key to ensuring that cases are caught early and treated early. To achieve this goal, we ask that the Committee include the following language in the committee report that will help target CDC funding to sepsis education and prevention. As one of our nation’s most recognized resources in addressing public health challenges, a greater investment by the CDC in sepsis education activities will help better prepare patients, families, healthcare providers and other stakeholders in combating sepsis at every stage.

Sepsis—The Committee urges the CDC to work with patient advocacy organizations, health provider organizations, and other federal agencies, including the National Institutes of Health, to expand public awareness, outreach, and education efforts, including health provider outreach, collaborative research initiatives, and other related activities to improve diagnosis and treatment of sepsis.
We thank you for your attention to this matter, and we look forward to working with you and your Committee to strengthen the federal response to a health problem that is unfortunately far too widespread. Should you or your staff need any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact Nicole Cohen with Representative Crowley’s office. Again, thank you for your consideration of these requests.

Sincerely,

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Joseph Crowley                   Member of Congress
Member of Congress                 Member of Congress