

Kigali, October 27, 2021

KIGALI DECLARATION ON THE CREATION OF RWANDA SEPSIS ALLIANCE (RSA)

From 27 to 29 October 2021, in Kigali, an international hybrid conference on sepsis was convened. A one-day face-to-face session was followed by a two day virtual conference under the theme: “**Rethinking Sepsis in Low Resource Settings: The Viewpoint from Africa and Other Low Resource Settings**”. The conference was organized by the Rwanda Emergency Care Association (RECA) and the African Sepsis Alliance (ASA) in partnership with the International Sepsis Forum (ISF).

The face-to-face session was attended by medical doctors, medical students and nurses from different hospitals across Rwanda, and some delegates from overseas. The chair of ASA, the chair of RECA and the representative of the Rwanda Ministry of Health attended to deliver key remarks, together with other high profile local and international speakers. The epidemiology, screening, triage, diagnosis, management of sepsis focusing on low- and middle-income countries (LMICs); and the consideration of LMICs in the new updated *Surviving Sepsis Campaign* guidelines (SSC) were discussed. The differences and changes from the previous 2016 version of the SSC guidelines were highlighted.

Since the 1994 Genocide perpetrated against the Tutsi, Rwanda has registered a tremendous improvement in the healthcare system, as evidenced by the massive drop in the rate of maternal and the under-five mortality, rebuilding healthcare infrastructures, new hospitals, availing the necessary equipments and training to raise the needed number of healthcare professionals. However, there is still a lot to do in order to meet the raising need of specialized healthcare services in Rwanda, and maximize on the quality of healthcare services delivered in Rwanda.

Despite efforts made by the Government of Rwanda mainly through the Ministry of Health (MoH) in improving the healthcare system, sepsis still claims many lives in Rwanda. In line with contributing to the reduction of sepsis related morbidity and mortality, the attendees of this inaugural conference launched the Rwanda Sepsis Alliance (RSA) with the aim to respond to the need of reducing the burden of sepsis.

Rwanda Sepsis Alliance (RSA)

Sepsis is defined as a dysregulated host response to infections that results in life-threatening organ dysfunction. In 2017, the World Health Assembly adopted resolution WHA70.7 on improving the prevention, diagnosis and clinical management of sepsis. Sepsis affected 48.9 million people globally and resulted in 11 million deaths in 2017. Nearly 85% of sepsis cases and sepsis-related deaths worldwide occur in LMICs.

Following the face-to-face International Sepsis Forum Symposium 2021, we are delighted to officially launch the Rwanda Sepsis Alliance (RSA); an organization whose primary mission is to address the global sepsis agenda in Rwanda.

RSA's main objective is to reduce the burden of sepsis in Rwanda.

RSA will achieve its mission through:

- promoting research, education and training, sepsis awareness campaign targeting healthcare professionals and non-healthcare professionals
- sustaining the antibiotic stewardship program
- advocacy to invest and build necessary infrastructures for improving sepsis prevention, diagnosis and treatment

The integration of sepsis prevention, early and appropriate diagnosis, and timely and appropriate clinical management in the healthcare system are key in the battle to reduce the sepsis burden across healthcare systems (public and private).

We call upon healthcare professionals, healthcare professional organizations, different institutions and NGOs, to join us in this fight against sepsis. The Rwanda Sepsis Alliance (RSA) membership is open to everyone and based on willingness to join. We need nurses, medical doctors and administrators to join this noble cause. We need people from different levels in the healthcare system and with a diversified background who are interested and committed to decrease the burden of sepsis.

We thank the Global Sepsis Alliance (GSA), the African Sepsis alliance (ASA), the International Sepsis Forum (ISF) and other stakeholders for taking the lead in providing expertise and making remarkable efforts to fight against sepsis worldwide. The Rwanda Sepsis Alliance (RSA) is delighted to join the above mentioned organizations in the common goal of ending preventable harm from sepsis.

Our vote of thanks also goes to the Rwanda Emergency Care Association (RECA) for endorsing our new organization; the Rwanda Sepsis Alliance, and we thank other healthcare professional organizations who have already shown great interests in joining us.

The Rwanda Sepsis Alliance (RSA) will work hard to ensure that people understand sepsis, contribute to sepsis prevention and aim to decrease the current sepsis burden in Rwanda.

RWANDA SEPSIS ALLIANCE (RSA) EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Dr. Evariste MUSHURU: Chair

Dr. Jean Paul MVUKIYEHE: Vice Chair

Dr. Hippolyte BWIZA MUHIRE: Executive Director

Dr. Vincent NDEBWANIMANA: Deputy Executive Director

Dr. Menelas NKESHIMANA: Secretary General

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