



Kathleen R. DeCataldo, Esq.  
Assistant Commissioner  
Office of Student Support Services  
89 Washington Avenue, Room 318-M EB  
Phone: (518) 486-6090 Web: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/sss/>

**To:** District Superintendents of BOCES, Superintendents of Public School Districts,  
Administrators of Public, Charter, and Nonpublic Schools

**From:** Kathleen R. DeCataldo 

**Subject:** September is Sepsis Awareness Month

**Date:** September 11, 2018

In recognition of Sepsis Awareness Month, the Department has partnered with the Staunton family to create resources for schools to teach students about this severe infection. Please share this information and resources with school health and other staff in your school or district.

Sepsis is an extreme response to infection. It is one of the leading causes of death in the United States, between 250,000 and 500,000 annually; claiming more American lives than AIDS, breast and prostate cancers, and stroke combined. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), sepsis is life-threatening and without the right treatment, can cause tissue damage, organ failure, and death. Any kind of infection, in your skin, lungs, urinary tract or other place, can lead to sepsis.

Sepsis is preventable and treatable. It is vital that students and schools learn about sepsis, how it can be prevented, and its symptoms so that immediate medical treatment can be sought. To accomplish this, the Department is encouraging the inclusion of sepsis education in a comprehensive K-12 health education program.

The impetus behind this important education campaign was the death of 12-year-old Rory Staunton, a resident of Queens, New York, who succumbed to sepsis less than a week after suffering a minor cut in school. To teach our students about this condition and to

prevent similar tragedies, the Department has collaborated with other agencies and experts to provide developmentally appropriate resources and a sample curriculum to aid schools in educating both students and school personnel about the importance of infection prevention, including the importance of properly cleaning all breaks in the skin, no matter how small. Additionally, we are stressing the importance of understanding what sepsis is, its signs and symptoms and when and where to seek medical care for such infections. You may access this information on the [NYSED Sepsis Webpage](#) .

We are encouraging schools to educate students about sepsis as part of the health education curriculum and to weave it into other curricula throughout all grade levels. Please review these resources and curriculum to use in your schools. Together we can provide our students with skills that will benefit them throughout their lives.

Once again, thank you for everything you do to help and support our students, families and communities. Should you need any additional information or have any questions, please feel free to reach out to our Office of Student Support Services at (518) 486-6090, or [studentsupportservices@nysed.gov](mailto:studentsupportservices@nysed.gov).