



PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Paul Allen’s Cause of Death Revealed to Be Septic Shock, a Known Complication of Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma**

On October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2018, Paul Allen, co-founder of Microsoft, passed away at the age of 65 at the Swedish Medical Center in Seattle, Washington. While his cause of death was originally reported as “complications” of Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma, newly available documents reveal his proximate cause of death was septic shock, resulting from underlying lymphoma-associated immunosuppression.

This is a profoundly sad outcome, but by no means a surprising one. There is a strong and undeniable relationship between cancer, its detrimental effects on the immune system, and the subsequent development of infections that lead to sepsis and septic shock. Cancer of all types increases the risk of developing sepsis by 10-fold<sup>1</sup>. In addition, cancer patients have a 55% higher chance of dying from sepsis than non-cancer patients<sup>2</sup>.

The immune system of a cancer patient can be markedly suppressed by the cancer itself or by medications used to treat the cancer. This leads to a reduced ability to fight deadly bugs, as well as common organisms found throughout our environment, which generally do not pose a threat to healthy individuals. As a result, infections lead to sepsis which is often the final common pathway to death for cancer patients.

Sepsis remains one of the most underestimated (and under-reported) health threats worldwide, affecting 27 to 32 million people annually, of which 7 to 9 million die. Sepsis affects both rich and poor alike, although the burden is heavily weighted to the poor. However, early recognition and treatment can save many lives.

### **About Sepsis**

Sepsis arises when the body’s response to an infection injures its own tissues and organs. Sepsis is an emergency; it may lead to shock, multiple organ failure, and death, especially if not recognized early and treated promptly. Sepsis is most common in people with compromised immune systems, like the very young, the very old, and those with chronic diseases

Chair  
**Konrad Reinhart**

Vice Chair  
**Niranjan Kissoon**

Chief Executive Officer  
**Ron Daniels**

Secretary  
**Flavia Machado**

Treasurer  
**Simon Finfer**

Governance  
**Ray Schachter**

General Manager  
**Marvin Zick**

Council

**D. Angus, US**  
**A. Argent, ZA**  
**A. Artigas, ES**  
**B. Du, CN**  
**M. Levy, US**  
**J. Marshall, CA**  
**J.-P. Mira, FR**  
**S. Nakagawa, JP**  
**H. Nasser AlRahma, AE**  
**J. O’Brien, US**  
**E. Papathanassoglou, CA**  
**K. Rooney, UK**  
**K. Tracey, US**

Founding Organizations

**World Federation of Societies of Intensive and Critical Care Medicine**

**World Federation of Pediatric Intensive and Critical Care Societies**

**World Federation of Critical Care Nurses**

**International Sepsis Forum**

**Sepsis Alliance**

Contact

**K. Reinhart**  
Global Sepsis Alliance  
Carl-Zeiß-Str. 12  
07743 Jena  
Germany  
+49 3641 93 23 192  
Konrad.Reinhart@med.uni-jena.de

**M. Zick**  
+49 3641 93 23 191  
Marvin.Zick@global-sepsis-alliance.org



like AIDS, cancer, diabetes, or Parkinson's disease. But people can also develop sepsis from a simple scrape, wound, or burn injury. Septic shock is the most severe end of the spectrum. Organs begin to shut down and, unchecked, multi-organ failure and death can ensue. Many patients who survive suffer from long-term disabilities.

### **About Paul Allen**

Paul Allen was an American business magnate, philanthropist, and investor. He is best known for founding Microsoft with Bill Gates in 1975. He was estimated to be one of the wealthiest persons in the world, with an estimated net worth of \$21.7 billion. He had a multibillion-dollar investment portfolio, including technology, real estate holdings, media companies, scientific research, and more.

He founded the Allen Institute for Brain Science, the Institute for Artificial Intelligence, and Stratolaunch Systems. Over the course of his life, Allen gave more than \$2 billion to education and arts, wildlife and environmental conservation, community services, healthcare, and more.

### **About the Global Sepsis Alliance and the World Sepsis Day Movement**

The Global Sepsis Alliance (GSA) is a non-profit charity organization with the mission to provide global leadership to reduce the worldwide burden of sepsis. The GSA is initiator of World Sepsis Day on September 13<sup>th</sup> every year and World Sepsis Congress, a series of free online congresses bringing knowledge about sepsis to all parts of the world.

[www.global-sepsis-alliance.org](http://www.global-sepsis-alliance.org)

[www.world-sepsis-day.org](http://www.world-sepsis-day.org)

[www.worldsepsiscongress.org](http://www.worldsepsiscongress.org)

### **Contact and Availability for Interviews**

Europe: [Dr. Ron Daniels, Prof. Konrad Reinhart](#)  
North America: [Prof. Niranjana Kissoon](#)  
South America: [Prof. Flavia Machado](#)  
Asia Pacific: [Prof. Simon Finfer](#)

### **References**

1. Martin et al. N Engl J Med; 348:1546 –1554; 2003.
2. Danai PA et al. CritCare Med 129:1432-1440;2006.