

# Surviving Sepsis Campaign

## CLINICAL PRACTICE AND ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs) FOR PUBLIC PANEL MEMBERS

Medical societies apply rigorous methods to develop and publish guidelines using scientific evidence relevant to a specific topic. The organizations then present that evidence in the form of recommendations and statements for clinicians and administrators who provide health care. The [Surviving Sepsis Campaign \(SSC\)](#), a joint endeavor of the European Society of Intensive Care Medicine (ESICM) and the Society of Critical Care Medicine (SCCM), gathers experts who represent the entire team of caregivers of critically ill and injured patients and their families -- nurses, doctors, pharmacists, respiratory therapists, physician assistants, dietitians, clergy, and others-- to serve on guidelines development panels. SSC guidelines are typically published in the well-known and highly respected journals *Intensive Care Medicine* and *Critical Care Medicine* or *Pediatric Critical Care Medicine*. To ensure the guidelines include a public perspective, the SSC has begun inviting patients and family members to serve on guidelines development panels. This fact sheet is for those public panel members.

### PROCESS FOR GUIDELINES DEVELOPMENT

Developing guidelines is an extremely rigorous process and is considered an evolving science of its own. Completing all of the individual and often complex steps from topic selection to publication of guidelines can take several years. SCCM's website offers an open-access guidelines procedures manual for SSC leadership and panelists that outlines the sequence and life cycle of SSC guidelines. An abbreviated diagram that illustrates the interconnectedness of the process where the patient and the family are primary drivers for the work in accordance with the SSC's vision and mission appears here.



### FAQs

#### **1. Who leads and participates in developing SSC guidelines?**

The SSC executive committee selects two co-chairs and two co-vice chairs as key leaders for every guideline. They are highly experienced critical care medicine subject matter experts. A panel, the term used for the larger development group, includes at least one methodologist whose role is to ensure that strict and consistent standards are applied to the guidelines development process. Often methodologists are critical care clinicians, so they are familiar with the subject. The methodologist has advanced training in guidelines development and is integral to supporting the formation of the recommendations that will guide clinicians in the care of patients and sometimes guide interactions with their families. Each guidelines panel includes one or more medical librarians and an appointed member who reviews and carefully manages any potential conflicts of interest declared by members of the entire guideline panel, including public members. Project management is coordinated by the Society of Critical Care Medicine's quality department. SCCM and ESICM fund the guidelines. SSC accepts no industry funding for guidelines development; however, donations are accepted from the public and clinicians to help support this important work.

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## 2. [How are topics identified?](#)

The SSC develops and publishes guidelines for adults and a separate set for children. Each of these has separate leadership. They are typically updated every four years based on the panel's input and updated literature reviews.

## 3. [Why are public members invited to participate in guidelines?](#)

Because the aim of guidelines is to offer informed, evidence-based recommendations for clinician consideration to improve care and outcomes for patients and their families, patients and families must provide input. Each guidelines panel is charged with determining outcomes relevant to the specific population being addressed. Outcomes can be related to improved quality of life, survival, or may be targeted to providing good end-of-life care. Such outcomes are all within the scope of practice for critical care medicine. Clinician-defined best outcomes may be different from those desired by patients and their loved ones; therefore, by participating in guidelines development, public members can help the panel better understand which outcomes are optimal from firsthand experiences. The important contributions of public members are honored and appreciated.

## 4. [What is the role of a public member?](#)

Public members will be engaged at varying times throughout the guideline cycle (often over 2-3 years) to:

- Assist in identifying relevant outcomes
- Participate and provide input during conference or video calls related to recommendations
- Provide suggestions to the draft manuscript as it is being prepared for submission to the journals
- Participate in podcasts, videos, or interviews to various audiences once the final publication is available

## 5. [Are special skills required?](#)

No special skills are needed to participate in guidelines development as a public member. The ability to speak up and to share views related specifically to the guideline topic in a constructive fashion is required. Familiarity with the concepts of scientific inquiry and peer-reviewed evidence is useful, but willingness to discuss experience as a patient or family member is paramount. SCCM will provide information and resources to help familiarize public members with their role.

## 6. [What is the time commitment for public members?](#)

Guidelines can take three to four years to develop and publish. Opportunities for public members to contribute occur at specific points in the process. A general estimate is from zero to three hours per month. Most video or conference calls are held on weekdays during typical work hours. Toll-free telephone or voice-over-internet connections are commonly used. A timeline will be provided so that public members can learn more about key milestones and when they might be asked to participate.

## 7. [Are public members compensated?](#)

Public members may be offered authorship on guidelines to acknowledge contributions properly; however, no financial payment is available for guideline activities for public or clinician panel members. Should public members be asked to attend an in-person meeting, travel expenses including economy airfare, hotel related to meeting, and ground transportation will be provided.

## 8. [Questions?](#)

Please contact SCCM for more information at +1-847-827-6990.