



## **CUSTOMER STORY**

# **Automated Sepsis Alerts Drive Better Outcomes at Goshen Health**

**Company:** Goshen Health

**Type:** Acute care provider

**Success:** Reduced sepsis-related mortality, shortened length of stay, and improved SEP-1 compliance using near real-time surveillance and alerts

[Goshen Health](#) is an independent, community-owned health system based in northern Indiana and operating in 40 locations. Their flagship facility, a 105-bed acute care nonprofit hospital, has been providing healthcare services for over 100 years. These services include cancer care, emergency and urgent care, heart and vascular care, women's health, neurology, and more.

Among the most critical and time-sensitive conditions they face is sepsis – a fast-moving, life-threatening response to infection that requires immediate action. Its rapid onset can be difficult to detect in time, and the risk of mortality rises by 4–9% for every hour that treatment is delayed.<sup>1</sup> It's also the leading cause of death in U.S. hospitals, contributing to more than 1.7 million hospitalizations and over 350,000 adult deaths or hospice transitions each year.<sup>2</sup>

Like many hospitals, Goshen Health was struggling to determine which potentially septic patients required immediate bedside intervention. The team was relying on manual processes and intermittent assessments to maintain compliance with required sepsis bundles – standardized protocols of care. This inefficiency made it difficult to identify severe sepsis patients fast enough and deliver consistent, timely care. Nurses were often spending hours combing through complex patient records, which was a time-consuming and error-prone task that pulled them away from the bedside.



# Using Near Real-Time Surveillance to Close Critical Care Gaps

After learning about the powerful capabilities of Inovalon's [VigiLanz Quality Management™](#), Goshen Health embarked on a comprehensive sepsis improvement project in 2022, powered by this solution.

Since then, they've continued to evolve their sepsis response – refining how alerts are received, triaged, and acted upon to reduce delays in care.

VigiLanz Quality Management continuously applies rule-based AI to patient data from the electronic health record to generate actionable alerts whenever potentially septic patients meet specific requirements. At Goshen Health, the rule fires only when it detects a documented infection, at least two SIRS (Systemic Inflammatory Response Syndrome) criteria, and signs of organ dysfunction within six hours of each other. This type of highly accurate surveillance enables clinicians to intervene earlier – and it wasn't long before they saw significant results.

“We've refined how we process the alerts and who receives them. It gives providers a second chance to take a clinical look and make a decision. That shift has improved how quickly and consistently we respond.”

— Emily Grooms, Manager of Clinical Informatics, Goshen Health

Initially, alerts went to Emergency Department (ED) nurses, but that approach didn't yield the improvements Goshen Health hoped for. After trial and error, the team found that unit secretaries were consistently positioned at workstations to receive alerts and relay them efficiently. Now, when a sepsis alert occurs, the secretary brings it directly to the provider, who confirms whether sepsis is still suspected. If so, the secretary pulls a paper tracking sheet, writes the alert time, and passes it to the nurse – initiating the bundle with clarity and speed.

Goshen Health is now preparing to expand this alerting workflow to inpatient units with the help of a virtual nurse team. The goal is to eliminate manual chart reviews – saving significant nurse time each day – and increase screening accuracy across the hospital.

“We’re expecting to save hours a day so nurses won’t have to screen manually and look through the charts for information,” said Emily Grooms, Manager of Clinical Informatics. “Instead, they’ll rely on the alerts to push that information to them, where they can double check and make sure before taking action.”



# Tracking the Right Signals and Seeing Results

The benefits of near real-time surveillance became apparent quickly. In the first 15 months, Severe Sepsis and Septic Shock Management (SEP-1) bundle compliance improved by 11%, with a 36.7% improvement compared to 2020. The solution's alerts proved to be highly accurate, with 95% of coded and manually abstracted severe sepsis cases matching or nearly matching the alerts – a clear indication that the tool was reliably flagging the right patients for early intervention.

For patients in septic shock, length of stay dropped by nearly three days without an associated increase in mortality. And in 2023, the hospital reported zero deaths from severe sepsis for four consecutive months – a powerful outcome that reinforced Goshen Health's commitment to early detection and rapid response.

Those improvements continued through 2025. "Our bundle compliance rates are continuing to climb, and we are near the 50th percentile for benchmark facilities as of November 2025," Grooms said. "We're making significant progress on overall sepsis bundle compliance and continuing to see mortality and length of stay remain low."

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# Making the Approach Sustainable for the Long Term

While success came quickly, Goshen Health knew sustainability would require more than technology; it would require smart refinement of the alerting logic and ongoing training for clinicians.

“Continued data analysis is very, very helpful to refine the alerts to ensure that they’re casting a wide net so we don’t miss people, but at the same time casting that net to appropriate people,” Grooms explained. “So training the system on an ongoing basis helps alleviate over-alert and alert fatigue for our clinicians.”

Improved documentation is another key area of focus. “We continue to look at provider documentation, making it as clean as possible so that Inovalon’s solution can read it and provide accurate information for our clinicians,” Grooms said.

Goshen Health is also expanding its lens on quality metrics, including an increased focus on the moments when sepsis care can break down: handoffs between teams. “We’re really looking at the process of our sepsis bundle compliance and opportunities now during the care transitions – so, the transition from ED to the unit, from ED to surgery to the unit, and where our opportunities are to improve,” Grooms said.



# Building Confidence Through Education and Trust

As frontline teams have become more familiar with the alerts, Goshen Health has worked to ensure the system supports – not replaces – clinical judgment.

“The education that we’ve been providing the team has helped them understand that these alerts are there to be an assistant, not necessarily dictate care,” said Grooms. “So providing the opportunity to assess the patient when alerts arrive still allows them to maintain clinical care over this person. And it’s just a tool to help gather the information.”

That mindset shift has taken root, Grooms confirmed when asked whether her earlier mantra – “if you get an Inovalon alert, go check it out” – has gained traction. “The providers are learning to trust the alerts as we refine the system, to really hone it in, to try to focus as much on the sepsis patient as possible.”

“We are here to take care of people, not do paperwork. So when we can have technology assist us with managing those administrative tasks or alerting us when high-risk things need to be addressed in a timely manner, it is extremely valuable.”

— Emily Grooms, Manager of Clinical Informatics, Goshen Health

# Sepsis Care Receives National Recognition

Grooms was honored with Inovalon's [Healthcare Hero Impact Award](#) in 2025 for her work leading the sepsis initiative at Goshen Health.

"I'm very humbled to be an award winner," she said. "I'm very excited to represent an entire team of people. This was not an Emily project. This was a Goshen Health project. And everybody worked very hard to do the right thing for our patients."

Attending Empower as a finalist, and winning the award, left her energized and inspired. "I was very excited to hear all of the award testimonies of the different projects everybody was working on," she said. "I was taking video so I can go back to my team and say, 'Hey, look what other people are doing. Do we have this opportunity as well and should we consider these things?'"



# Looking Ahead: More Accurate Alerts, Faster Care

Goshen Health's next focus is to enhance detection of septic shock cases – a complex condition that requires a different timing protocol than early sepsis.

Grooms is also eager to see the impact of the inpatient expansion as it rolls out. “We’ve made great strides,” she said, noting that surveillance helps the team avoid calling physicians inappropriately or missing opportunities to reach out to physicians when additional care is needed.

“I’m very excited to work with the inpatient team, to help reduce time burden and give them accurate screening tools so that they’re having appropriate conversations with the hospitalists. I’m also very excited to explore the potential for sepsis shock with these alerts, as that seems to be an opportunity for improvement, as well as the identification of that particular onset time.”





## Don't Let Sepsis Slip Through the Cracks

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1.Sepsis and Septic Shock. Sepsis Alliance, June 18, 2024. <https://www.sepsis.org/sepsisand/septic-shock/>

2.Sepsis Alliance Press Kit. Sepsis Alliance, March 2024. <https://www.sepsis.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Sepsis-Alliance-Press-Kit-2024.pdf>

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