

## **RESOURCES** | QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN POLST SECTIONS A & B

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### **What are Sections A and B on the CA POLST Form?**

Section A of the POLST Form provides instructions for attempting Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) if (and only if) the patient has no pulse and is not breathing. If a patient is found with no pulse and is not breathing, they have died. This is the only time that Section A will be applied.

Section B Medical Interventions, provides instructions regarding treatment choices for a *patient who has a pulse and/or is breathing* (the patient is still alive). Section B applies to patients who are alive.

### **Choosing Attempt Resuscitation/CPR in Section A**

If a person chooses Attempt Resuscitation/CPR in Section A, they must also choose Full Treatment in Section B: Medical Interventions. A person cannot choose Attempt CPR and then choose Comfort-Focused Treatment or Selective Treatment for Section B.

If a person chooses CPR, they must be willing to have Advance Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) protocols followed. This may include intubation, ventilator, and intensive care in the ICU.

Full Treatment has the primary goal of prolonging life by all medically effective means. When a patient chooses Full Treatment, it is important to discuss the severity of their illness and what they would want if they were not getting better. Ask the patient, "If the doctor thought your chances of a good recovery were poor, would you want to be kept alive on the ventilator?" If the patient does not want long-term life support, check the box, "Trial Period of Full Treatment" in Section B.

### **Choosing Do Not Attempt Resuscitation/DNR (Allow Natural Death) in Section A**

If a person chooses Do Not Attempt Resuscitation/DNR (Allow Natural Death) in Section A, no attempt will be made to resuscitate them. If Do Not Attempt Resuscitation/DNR (Allow Natural Death) has been chosen, any of the three choices for Medical Intervention in Section B may be selected.

For example, when patients choose Do Not Attempt Resuscitation/DNR (Allow Natural Death) plus Full Treatment, they want aggressive medical interventions if they have a pulse and/or are

breathing, but they do not want to be resuscitated if they are found dead, i.e. have no pulse and are not breathing.

## Diagram of POLST Medical Interventions

