

POLST = Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment

Key Facts About POLST for Residents and Family Members

The POLST form is a written order from the physician that helps give older people or those with serious health conditions more control over their own care. It can help you get the care you want, and also to protect you from getting medical treatments you DO NOT want.

- **The POLST is voluntary.** Nursing homes may include the POLST in their admission documents, but you are not required to complete a POLST form if you do not wish to.
- **Don't complete the form until you've had an in-depth discussion.** Before filling out the POLST form, you should have an in-depth discussion with your physician or someone trained to discuss the POLST form. This conversation is very important and will address your overall health, your health care wishes and goals for your care. It is very helpful to include your family members in the conversation, even if they are not your designated decision-maker, so they understand your health condition and are aware of your treatment wishes.
- **The POLST form is not valid until it is signed by both you (or your designated decisionmaker) AND your physician.**
- **A POLST form does NOT replace an advance directive.** An advance directive is still the best way to appoint a legal healthcare decisionmaker, and is recommended for all adults, regardless of your age or current health. A POLST works together with your advance directive, providing more specific detail regarding care wishes and goals of care.
- **The original bright pink form travels with you** to different settings – home, assisted living, nursing facility or hospital. If you go home or to another care setting, the original pink form should go with you, and be kept in an easy to access place.
- **You only have to complete a new POLST if your treatment wishes change.** You do not need to fill out a new POLST if you move from one facility to another, or change doctors.
- **Because the POLST form is a physician order, emergency medical personnel are required to adhere to its instructions** regarding CPR and other emergency medical care. The POLST form is printed on bright pink paper so it will be easily recognizable by all health care personnel.
- **You can request different treatment or void the POLST form, at any time.** To change your POLST instructions, complete a new POLST form and have your doctor sign it. To void the form, draw a line through sections A through D, write "VOID" in large letters, then sign and date the line.