



FOUNDATION FOR  
HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

## **NEWS RELEASE**

**Attention Business Editors**

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**For Immediate Release  
December 16, 2011**

### **Foundation for Healthy Communities receives national grant for end-of-life care**

**CONCORD** - The Foundation for Healthy Communities has received a three-year national grant for the development and implementation of a new program in New Hampshire known as Provider Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment (POLST).

The State Coalition Advancement Grant, funded by the Oregon Health & Science University's Center for Ethics in Health Care, is one of just five to be issued nationwide.

"POLST was launched in Oregon 20 years ago," said Shawn LaFrance, executive director of the FHC, "and it enables patients to document their choices – to have full treatment or to decline treatments – in the form of medical orders. In doing so, POLST increases the likelihood that a patient's wishes will be honored in the event of a life-threatening emergency.

"Expanding the reach of POLST is our goal," he added, "because effective communication between the patient or legally designated decision-maker and health care professionals makes certain that the decisions are sound and based on the patient's understanding of their medical condition, their prognosis, the benefits and burdens of the treatment and their personal goals for care."

Creators of the program sought to overcome limits of advance directives such as living wills. People create those directives to outline treatment they want to have or avoid in a medical crisis, but those forms need to be translated into medical orders and may not be available in an emergency or be too vague to be useful.

Printed POLST forms are signed by both the patient and the physician. They are brightly colored for visibility, they have check boxes to record specific treatment choices, they

accompany seriously ill patients as they move from one care setting to another and people are free to modify or revoke them at any time, according to LaFrance.

Fourteen states currently have POLST programs. Other states to receive the new three-year advancement grants include Maine, Idaho, Tennessee and Louisiana.

The Foundation for Healthy Communities is a non-profit partnership involving hospitals, physicians, health plans, home care agencies and other organizations working to improve health in our state. The Foundation's mission is to improve health and health care delivery in New Hampshire. Learn more at [www.healthyNH.com](http://www.healthyNH.com).

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