



Implementing a POLST Process for Patient Care: Operations & Quality Issues

(Provider Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment)

1. *Where do we start?*

Start small. Start with a single care unit or team of providers. Think about where there is a group of patients who their medical provider would not be surprised if they were to die in the next year.

2. *Who is responsible for POLST discussions?*

Ideally, trained POLST facilitators including medical providers, nurses and social workers will initiate discussions. The completed POLST form must be reviewed and signed by a physician/APRN and the patient or their DPOAH or guardian.

3. *Where should the POLST form be kept to ensure that it is accessible when needed?*

The original yellow POLST form should be with the patient wherever he/she is sent outside a health facility or hospital to ensure that appropriate care will be provided. (Use the same procedure you use when a patient has a *pink Portable DNR* form.) Each organization must decide the best place in the patient's medical record to hold the original POLST form and how to incorporate POLST orders into the in-patient orders system, where applicable.

4. *Who should be involved in implementing a successful POLST program for your organization?*

It is important to obtain leadership support and designate "champions" to ensure organizational support and commitment for a POLST program.

5. *How will we measure the quality of our POLST process?*

Monitoring the process to ensure patients are offered to participate and when they do that the POLST form is correctly completed and moves with the patient is essential to success. Embed monitoring in current systems (e.g., admission/intake, etc.)

6. *Who should be included in organizational-based education?*

It is important to provide education to all staff although it will vary based on whether it is staff that may encounter a patient POLST form and/or assist a patient in the POLST conversation and completion of a form.

7. *How will we coordinate our organization's POLST operations with other health care providers in the communities where patients live?*

Physician practices, home care providers, LTC facilities, community health centers, EMS, hospitals, etc. are all part of the health care system that serve patients and families in a community. Understanding how POLST works with other providers will ensure that patient goals of care are understood and communicated.