

April 2015

POLST

physician orders for life-sustaining treatment paradigm

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Dear Friends,

In just a few short weeks, on April 16th, we will celebrate **National Healthcare Decisions Day** (NHDD), which is a day to educate and empower Americans to share and document their wishes. POLST is a powerful advance care planning tool so it is essential that the National POLST Paradigm participates in this important day! This is a great opportunity for us to educate about the value that POLST Programs hold for patients with serious illness or frailty, and highlight the way that POLST complements advance directives.



Let us know what your POLST Program is doing! The National POLST Paradigm is here to support you and help spread the word - email us at admin@polst.org so we can share your efforts nationally. Remember that **you** can also make a difference - use NHDD to educate your friends and family about POLST and advanced care planning. By working together - and on multiple fronts - we can be sure to inspire and inform as many people as possible.

Remember: add admin@polst.org to your safe sender list to receive updates about NHDD, webinars, and National POLST Paradigm events.

Best wishes,

Amy Vandenbroucke, JD
Executive Director

Our News

FEATURED NEWS

Kentucky MOST Legislation Signed Into Law

This past month, Kentucky Governor Steve Beshear signed **legislation** that authorizes use of Medical Orders for Scope of Treatment (MOST) Forms in the state. Congratulations to all who worked to have this legislation passed!

POLST Legislative Comparison Updated

The POLST Program Legislative Comparison Grid, provided to us by NPPTF Legal Advisor Charlie Sabatino, has been updated to reflect new legislation and rule-making. For each state with a statute or regulation about POLST, the document lists key elements and can serve as a resource for POLST Programs pursuing legislative action.

To read the updated document, [click here](#).

Oregon POLST Registry Annual Report Released

The **Oregon POLST Registry** released its 2014 Annual Report this month. The report documents the registry's activities over the past year, including the receipt of over 50,000 POLST Forms, increased use of the Registry in emergent situations, and growing interest in using the Registry for research.

To read the report, [click here](#).

Measuring What Matters

The **American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine** (AAHPM) and the **Hospice & Palliative Nurses Association** (HPNA) have released a report titled **Measuring What Matters**. The report identifies performance measures that AAHPM and HPNA recommend all hospice and palliative care programs use for program improvement. Three of the measures are relevant to the POLST Paradigm:

1. Documentation of Surrogate
2. Treatment Preferences
3. Care Consistency with

POLST Featured in the New York Times

In a recent **New York Times column**, journalist Paula Span explored the limits of advance directives. She recounts the story of an elderly man who had written a specific advance directive documenting his wish for comfort care only. However, the man was hospitalized, placed on a ventilator, and given a feeding tube before his health care professionals realized that he had an advance directive. Span notes that such cases are not infrequent.

Span interviewed National POLST Paradigm Task Force (NPPTF) member Susan Tolle, who emphasized that POLST Programs make it more likely for patients with serious illness or frailty to receive the care they want. In particular, Dr. Tolle notes that POLST Forms are medical orders and they can be made readily available through electronic registries.

This column reinforces the message that POLST is an essential component of advance care planning that complements, but does not replace, advance directives.

To read the full column, [click here](#).

Featured Events

NHDD and Older Americans Month

Two upcoming events focus on issues of advance care planning and aging. April 16th is **National Healthcare Decisions Day** (NHDD), which aims to inspire people to express their wishes and encourage health care professionals to respect those wishes. In past years, POLST Programs in **Louisiana**, **New York**, and **West Virginia** have participated in NHDD. These POLST Programs have partnered with organizations to promote awareness of advance care planning, sent out special newsletters, and engaged in Twitter conversations. This year, we already know that Louisiana's LaPOST program will be hosting a Twitter chat at **#NHDDchat** on April 16th at 12 pm CST. Similarly, New York's MOLST Program has created a **campaign** for NHDD. We encourage all POLST Programs to participate in NHDD activities and are eager to help support these activities by advertising on **POLST.org**, social media, and a special edition of our e-newsletter. Please **contact us** by April 10th if your state has plans for NHDD.

Another opportunity to educate about POLST is during May - celebrating **Older Americans Month**. Older Americans Month was established in 1963 to recognize the contributions of older Americans. This year the theme is *Get into the Act*, which focuses on "how older adults are taking charge of their health, getting engaged in their communities, and making a positive impact in the lives of others." One way that older adults can take charge of their health is by engaging in advanced care planning conversations and, if they have serious illness or frailty, completing a POLST Form. Older Americans Month is a great opportunity for POLST Programs to communicate the value they provide for older individuals facing serious illness. **Share your**

Documented Treatment Preferences

To read the Measuring What Matters article in the Journal of Pain and Symptom Management, [click here](#).

plans with us for promoting POLST during Older Americans Month!

FEATURED RESOURCE

IOM Recommendations and POLST

The NPPTF Communications Committee has produced a set of talking points regarding the relationship between the Institute of Medicine (IOM) recommendations found in **Dying in America** (its report on end-of-life care) and the National POLST Paradigm. These points help POLST Programs emphasize how the POLST Paradigm aligns with the **Key Findings and Recommendations** from the IOM report and documents the specific references to the POLST Paradigm in the report. In addition, the document contains general guidance about what the POLST Paradigm is - and reminders of what it is not.

This set of talking points is aimed at helping POLST Programs communicate the value of POLST for improving the quality and availability of end-of-life care in America. We encourage POLST Programs to utilize these talking points in communications strategies and especially when working with the media. If you have any questions or suggestions, please **let us know**.

To read the document, [click here](#).

National POLST Paradigm
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