

December 2015

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Dear Friends,

The holidays are a time in which families tend to gather, so it's also a great time to share your wishes with your loved ones. We can all help normalize conversations about end of life, so let's lead by example. There are many tools available to guide you. Check out www.gowish.org for a game-based approach to talking with your loved about end-of-life wishes. Another great online resource is [The Conversation Project](http://TheConversationProject.org). Know about others? Let us know at admin@polst.org.



Amy Vandenbroucke

I also wanted to take this time to thank you for all your efforts this year to improve and expand quality POLST Paradigm programs. Last week I attended a John A. Hartford Foundation conference where I met many attendees who wanted to talk to me about POLST in their states - and I have no doubt this is due to your making POLST something to talk about!

In his keynote speech at this conference David Altman reminded us: *If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.* It takes all of us, working together, to make POLST the valuable tool it is and should be! If you haven't already done so, I hope you'll make plans to join us at the [National POLST Paradigm Conference. The Future of POLST: Challenges and Opportunities](http://NationalPOLSTParadigmConference.org), February 3-5, 2016. We've extended the Early Bird Discount through December 11th (this Friday) in order to facilitate your plans! Please come and join us in strengthening the POLST Paradigm by contributing your thoughts, experiences, and concerns. More details below!

Best wishes,

Amy Vandenbroucke, JD
Executive Director

NEW! Indiana POST Video available online!

The **Indiana POST Video** is available online as a tool to help explain the Indiana Physician Orders for Scope of Treatment Program. This 9-minute video is appropriate for health care providers as well as patients and families. The Indiana POST Program encourages you to share it broadly and incorporate it into appropriate educational offerings.

[See the video on the Indiana POST website](#)

Kentucky Board of Medical Licensure released guidance on MOST Form

Kentucky has made continual progress on their Medical Orders for Scope of Treatment (MOST) this year. The MOST Form was standardized by the Kentucky Board of Medical Licensure (KBML) in February, MOST legislation was signed into law in June, and, in September, the KBML issued guidance on the use of the MOST Form.

[Read about the KBML's Guidance on MOST](#)

POLST and Dementia Webinar recording available online

On November 17, 2015, The National POLST Paradigm hosted a webinar, **The Role of POLST in the Care of People with Dementia**, which is now available online for anyone to watch. Kenneth Brummel-Smith, M.D., who is the Charlotte Edwards Maguire Professor of Geriatrics at Florida State University College of Medicine, discussed POLST and advance care planning in the context of dementia, including Alzheimer Disease and other dementias. He also explained the typical disease progression for dementia patients, how it is measured, and how it can affect the timing of advance care planning, plus surprising evidence in strong support of the involvement of dementia patients in the POLST process.

National POLST Paradigm Early Bird Registration extended through December 11!

The 2016 National POLST Paradigm Conference, titled *The Future of POLST: Challenges and Opportunities*, is just around the corner, February 3-5, 2016, at the Hyatt Regency in Chicago, Illinois. In response to several inquiries, the **Early Bird Registration Deadline has been extended through Friday, December 11, 2015.**

Registration is open to anyone interested in attending. The agenda is complete and includes presentations on special topics such as: *Lessons Learned in Developing POLST Forms, Opportunities and Pitfalls of POLST Registry Legislation, and Case Studies: Addressing Reciprocity*. We will also have discussions about POLST in various community and care settings; breakout sessions on engagement of legislators, consumers, and funders; meetings by regional cohorts; overviews of current and future POLST research; and topics centered on technology, quality assurance, strategy, outreach, and training.

Finally, a Facebook Event page has been set up for the conference as a venue for announcements and for attendees to network with colleagues. Attendees and other interested parties should feel free to email, call, or post questions to the Facebook Event page.



[Register online](#)
[Make Hotel Reservations online](#)
[View the Facebook Event page](#)

Featured Resource

Top 10 Myths and Facts about Advance Directives featured in American Bar Association publication.

Advance Care Planning is a main theme of the September-October 2015 edition of *Bifocal*, a bimonthly journal published by the American Bar Association Commission on Law and Aging. This latest edition of *Bifocal* most prominently features an article titled *Top Ten Myths and Facts about Health Care Advance Directives*, written by Charlie Sabatino, the director of the American Bar Association's Commission on Law and Aging.

In this article, first, terms such as Advance Care Planning, Living Will, and POLST are defined. Then, the article presents and discusses the top ten myths about advance directives. Most importantly, the article not only exposes these myths, but gives insightful direction for the best course of action about each of these subtopics of advance care planning.

For example, *Myth #3: Advance directives are legally binding, so doctors have to follow them*, is explained as False because "Doctors must respect your known wishes, but can refuse to comply with your wishes if they have an objection of conscience or consider your wishes medically inappropriate."

[Watch Webinar on POLST and Dementia](#)

\$2.2 M Awarded to Nursing School Professor to evaluate Indiana POST as an advance-care planning tool

The National Institute of Nursing Research awarded \$2.2 million to Susan Hickman, nursing school professor at Indiana University-Purdue University Indiana, to evaluate the use of **Indiana Physician Orders for Scope of Treatment** as an advance-care planning tool. The research will provide information on how well POST reflects Indiana nursing home patients' treatment preferences and how well patients understand the orders they are choosing.

[Read the News Release from IUPUI](#)

Susan Tolle, M.D., discussed POLST on morning news show, AM Northwest

Broadcast on September 24, 2015, Susan Tolle, M.D., Founder and Director of the OHSU Center for Ethics in Health Care, was featured on KATU's program AM Northwest. In the 4-minute clip, Dr. Tolle delivers clear, easy-to-understand answers to questions such as, *Is POLST for everyone?* and, *Why have a POLST?*

[View the interview on AM Northwest's website](#)

Kaiser Family Foundation revises its 10 FAQs: Medicare's Role in End-of-Life Care

Taking into account the new Medicare rules going into effect in 2016, the Kaiser Family Foundation revised their *10 FAQs: Medicare's Role in End-of-Life Care*. This online resource, revised November 5, 2015, provides substantial information with data, graphs, and references. The *10 FAQs: Medicare's Role in End-of-Life Care* article is also available as an 8-page PDF.

The *POLST Form* is discussed as a document necessary to ensure that EMS provides medical care consistent with your wishes. Even if you express that you do not want to be resuscitated in an advance directive, if someone dials 911, EMS must usually attempt to resuscitate you unless a valid DNR Order is in place.

Of note: In most states with POLST Programs, the POLST Form, serves as a valid DNR Order if it specifies Do Not Resuscitate. However, this underscores the need to understand the POLST Program specifics in your state, as there are some states with exceptions.

Myth #7: Just talking to my doctor and family about what I want is not legally effective, is also explored. "Combine talking and documenting... Clarify your wishes; talk with your physician, health care agent, and family about your wishes; put those wishes in writing in an advance directive and make sure everyone has a copy."

The article also includes a link to the ABA Commission on Law and Aging's *Toolkit for Health Care Advance Planning*, and this edition of *Bifocal* also features other articles relating to advance care planning, such as the role of surrogates in medical decision making, and how 2014 changes to Medicaid rules provide better support to Family Caregivers.

Bifocal is freely available online in both HTML and PDF formats.

[Read the Top 10 Myths and Facts about Health Care Advance Directives.](#)
[Download the Top 10 Myths article as a PDF.](#)
[Read more about Bifocal.](#)

Featured Research

JPSM Article: POST Forms More than Advance Directives Associated with Out-of-Hospital Deaths.

West Virginia researchers recently published an article in the *Journal of Pain and Symptom Management*, titled, "POST Forms More than Advance Directives Associated with Out-of-Hospital Death: Insights from a State Registry." POST, or Physician Orders for Scope of Treatment, is West Virginia's POLST Paradigm Program. This study compared patient wishes with actual death outcomes of patients with POST Forms and Advance Directives, particularly with regard to location of death.

Previous studies have shown that most patients report that they would prefer to die outside of a hospital, both nationally (90.9% of Medicare beneficiaries) as well as in West Virginia (92% of all patients 18 years of age and older). However, far fewer patients actually die outside hospitals (73.1% in the national study of Medicare recipients, and only 58.8% of West Virginian adults). Some studies have shown that advance directives (ADs) don't result in any difference in rates of patient death occurring in- or out-of-hospital.

[Read the 10 FAQs online](#)
[Download the PDF \(548 KB\)](#)

Available online: National Council on Aging factsheet on 2016 Medicare coverage of Advance Care Planning

Beginning in 2016, Medicare Part B will cover advance care planning, that is, discussions of beneficiary preferences for end-of-life care. The National Council on Aging has produced a fact sheet describing what advance care planning is, and how it differs from advance directives and hospice care.

[Download Medicare and ACP Factsheet](#)
[Visit the NCOA website](#)

In this study, little difference was found between out-of-hospital death (OHD) rates for West Virginians overall (58.8%) vs. West Virginians with ADs (56.9%). These results are consistent with that of other studies, showing that ADs have little impact on OHD. It was also noted that the overall study and national average OHD rates were comparable (73.3% for the study, 71% nationally).

In contrast, POST Forms include a "Comfort Measures" option for patients who wish to indicate that they do not want to be transferred to a hospital, except "if comfort needs cannot be met in current location." In this study, patients who indicated this preference had the lowest in-hospital death rate (thus the highest OHD rate), suggesting that the POST Form is effective in ensuring that patient wishes for an out-of-hospital death are honored. Patients with POST "Comfort Measures" orders died outside a hospital setting 88.4% of the time, compared to a 56.9% OHD rate for patients with ADs and no POST.

[Pedraza, S. L., Culp, S., Falkenstine, E. C., & Moss, A. H. \(2015\). POST Forms More Than Advance Directives Associated With Out-of-Hospital Death: Insights From a State Registry. *Journal of pain and symptom management*.](#)

National POLST Paradigm
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