



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Public Health
Bureau of Health Care Safety and Quality
99 Chauncy Street, Boston, MA 02111

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May 2, 2017

Amy Vandenbroucke, JD
Executive Director
National POLST Paradigm
7713 Oldchester Road
Bethesda, Maryland 20817

Dear Ms. Vandenbroucke:

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (Department) has a long-standing commitment to ensuring that all patients have the right and ability to receive information about the full range of options for their care and enable them and their advocates to make informed and appropriate healthcare choices. With advice from the Massachusetts Palliative Care and Quality of Life Interdisciplinary Advisory Council, established pursuant to Chapter 478 of the Acts of 2014, the Department is taking the appropriate steps, with your advice and guidance, to ensure that our Massachusetts Medical Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment (MOLST) program fully conforms with the Physician Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment (POLST) standards set forth by the National POLST Paradigm (NPP) Task Force.

MOLST is a standardized medical order form for use by clinicians caring for patients with serious advancing illnesses.¹ It was enacted April 1, 2012, upon recommendation of the Massachusetts Expert Panel on End-of-Life Care, convened in 2010 pursuant to Chapter 305 of the Acts of 2008. The law also initiated the Medical Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment Demonstration Project in Worcester, Massachusetts, after which it was recommended that MOLST, a modified POLST form informed by healthcare groups, professional and consumer groups, be expanded throughout Massachusetts.²

On January 12, 2017, the Palliative Care and Quality of Life Interdisciplinary Advisory Council urged the Department to join the NPP in order to ensure that Massachusetts conforms to the national paradigm. This recommendation to join the NPP advances the Department's goals to improve palliative care initiatives in the Commonwealth, and our understanding of the importance of the NPP in improving the quality of care for seriously ill or frail patients by creating a voluntary system that honors patient medical treatment wishes.

Your continued support is appreciated. We look forward to working collaboratively with you and your staff to conform to the POLST Paradigm in Massachusetts.

Sincerely,

Eric Sheehan, JD, Director
Bureau of Health Care Safety and Quality

¹ <http://www.molst-ma.org/>

² <http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dph/programs/hcq/healthcare-quality/health-care-facilities/life-sustaining-treatment-molst.html>