

POLST

physician orders for life-sustaining treatment paradigm

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Dear Friends,

2015 is already proving to be an exciting year for POLST! We started the year with **Iowa** becoming the 17th state to be endorsed and now I'm excited to welcome **Mississippi** as our 25th developing state - I love seeing our **map become more pink!**



In addition to growing our Paradigm, there are several states making progress legislatively. Congratulations to **Wyoming** - they have successfully passed POLST legislation and it is pending the Governor's signature! Kentucky's MOST bill, which already passed on the Senate floor, just passed out of the House Committee on Health and Welfare this past week. And legislation for POLST has been introduced in **Arkansas**. Please keep me posted about what is happening in your state by emailing me at amy@polst.org.

Legislative activities are not just limited to the states! I spoke with Congressman Blumenauer (D-OR) and his staff this week about his Personalize Your Care Act that he plans to reintroduce (possibly by the end of this month!). He has updated the bill to allow existing POLST Programs - not just new ones - to be eligible to apply for the grant funding that this bill would provide, which is fantastic news. Further, while at the **Coalition to Transform Advanced Care (C-TAC)** Summit in Washington DC last week, I also heard from Senators Whitehouse (D-RI), Isakson (R-GA) and Warner (D-VA) about their policy plans for advance care planning. I appreciated Senator Warner's recognition of POLST's value and the need to ensure its portability - it's great to see POLST become increasingly part of our national conversation on advance care planning!

Thank you to all the work you are doing - it is a busy year so far and I see great things coming our way in the next few months!

Best wishes,

Amy Vandenburg

Our News

POLST at AAHPM Annual Assembly

NPPTF Member Woody Moss, MD, and Oregon POLST leader Erik Fromme, MD, each presented at the recent **American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine (AAHPM)** Annual Assembly. Dr. Moss presented a talk titled "Comparison of Patients' Practices and End-of-Life Outcomes with Use of Advance Directives and the Physician Orders for Scope of Treatment Program: Insights from a Statewide Registry" and Dr. Fromme's presentation was titled "Oregon Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment (POLST): Completion in Proximity to Death".

We were pleased to see POLST represented at this important meeting and congratulate both Dr. Moss and Dr. Fromme on their participation!

Mississippi is the Newest Developing POLST Program!

Congratulations to Mississippi's Physician Orders for Sustaining Treatment (POST) Program for gaining Developing Status from the NPPTF! We look forward to working with the Mississippi POST Program to develop a program that becomes a standard component of advance care planning in Mississippi.

To read more about Developing Program criteria, [click here](#).

FEATURED NEWS

Advance Care Planning on PBS's Frontline

PBS's **Frontline** recently aired a documentary titled "Being Mortal", focused on issues of the end of life and the physician-patient relationship. The documentary is centered around Harvard surgeon and author Atul Gawande, whose **recent book (also titled Being Mortal)** has focused popular attention on the end of life. In the film, Gawande highlights the broader problems of how we die in America and shares stories that demonstrate the challenges that arise as death approaches.

The documentary spawned the hashtag #WhatMattersMost, which allowed viewers and others to express what is important to them at the end of life. The hashtag became a trending topic on **Twitter** and raised awareness about end of life issues.

Although "Being Mortal" raised important issues about end-of-life care in America, it neglected to mention the POLST Paradigm. As a major component of end-of-life care, omitting POLST was a significant oversight and failed to acknowledge the central role that POLST plays for individuals with serious illness and frailty.

To view the documentary, [click here](#).

FEATURED ARTICLE

POLST Featured in New England Journal of Medicine

A recent Case Decisions feature in the New England Journal of Medicine focuses on a seriously ill woman facing end-of-life decisions. Clinicians were posed with the question of who should be responsible for initiating the conversation about goals of care: a primary care physician, the oncology team, or a palliative medicine specialist. Three physicians penned responses, each arguing for one of these types of physicians to take responsibility for leading the advance care planning process. The NPPTF's Susan Tolle, MD, wrote the response suggesting that primary care physicians needed to be responsible for initiating these conversations.

Tolle notes that having earlier conversations can improve patient

March Webinar: EMS's Vital Role with POLST

On March 30th, from 12 pm - 1 pm Pacific Time, the National POLST Paradigm will host a webinar on POLST and EMS. The webinar will be led by Angela Fera, the EMS advisor to the National POLST Paradigm Task Force. She will present on the importance of implementing POLST in the context of EMS.

To register for the webinar, [click here](#).

Endorsed POLST Program Logo License Agreement

During March, the National POLST Paradigm will be sending out a licensing agreement for Endorsed POLST Program Logos. This license agreement will delineate the ways that the logos may be used to identify programs that meet endorsement criteria.

To learn more about endorsement criteria, [click here](#).

satisfaction and has an affect on the treatments patients choose. As a result, empowering primary care physicians to initiate conversations can provide real benefits to patients.

While the case focused on advance directives, Dr. Tolle highlights the limitations of advance directives for patients with serious illness or frailty. She emphasizes that POLST Forms offer patients a greater chance that their wishes will be followed. Since POLST Forms are based on conversations, Tolle underscores the crucial role that primary care providers can play in determining and recording patient wishes.

To read the full article, click here:

Tolle, S (2015). "As the Primary Care Physician, Discuss the Goals of Care with the Patient Yourself." *New England Journal of Medicine*, accessed on 2/25/2015 at <http://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMc1de1411152#t=cldeOpt1>.

FEATURED RESOURCE

Administrative Alerts for CMS CPR Guidance

The Oregon Department of Human Services recently issued an administrative alert regarding the use of POLST in nursing facilities. The alert instructs providers in nursing facilities to honor POLST Forms in the case of a medical emergency. More importantly, the alert clearly identifies the differences between POLST Forms and advance directives and provides a set of reminders to providers. These include a reminder that POLST Forms are always voluntary and are not required, that POLST is not for everybody, and that POLST Forms are the culmination of advance care planning conversations.

The guidance issued in Oregon can serve as a model for other states seeking to issue alerts about POLST Programs to providers.

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

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Honoring the wishes of those with serious illness
and frailty

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