

Recommendations for Integrating POLST Forms with Electronic Health Records

It is critical for health care professionals to have access to POLST forms during a medical emergency when the patient lacks capacity. Electronic health recordkeeping systems (EHRs), also called electronic medical record systems, create the ability for POLST forms to be immediately accessible. As EHRs are being increasingly adopted, health care facilities must consider how to best integrate POLST forms with their EHRs.

There are two formats to consider when integrating POLST within an EHR. The first is completing a paper POLST form and then uploading and storing a copy with an EHR. The second is creating an electronic POLST (ePOLST) where the POLST form is completed electronically with a copy printed for the patient to keep. Because of the flexibility in form completion, increased accessibility to educational materials and improved ability for quality assurance activities, National POLST strongly encourages facilities to utilize electronic completion of POLST, but should utilize, when available, a statewide ePOLST system.

National POLST has approved the following recommendations –

Recommendations for either format:

POLST forms should be displayed in a unique POLST field/tab accessible instantly within a single click from the patient header. The tab can be marked with a Yes or No box, so that the health care professional can see if a form exists before opening the tab.

The unique POLST field with inpatient and outpatient EHR contains only POLST medical orders and is independent of the advance directive information.

The EHR system had the ability to rapidly receive and accurately store older versions clearly demarcated as voided and display the most recent document.

Health care professionals should be able to access POLST forms within the EHR system. Single sign-on should be enabled to ensure no additional username or password needs to be entered. (If the EHR system offers access to an external POLST form database or system it should be via a secure and authenticated portal, with an interoperable data exchange standard or link).

The most current POLST field within the inpatient or outpatient EHR should be easily accessible and viewed by the patient via any integrated patient portal.