

National POLST: Electronic POLST FAQs

POLST: Portable Medical Orders

Can a POLST form be signed electronically?

It varies by state. Refer to the [CMS emergency waiver on telemedicine for support](#).

Is there a National POLST Registry?

No. Registries are developed at the state level. See the current activity: <https://polst.org/registry-map-pdf>. Some states are starting emergency registries so contact your state to learn more (www.polst.org/map and click on your state).

Are verbal consents from patient/decisionmaker valid?

Verbal consent from the patient/decisionmaker is permissible in accordance with facility/community policy. Best practice is to carefully document the conversation with the patient/decisionmaker, and write something similar to "verbal consent of (patient/decisionmaker)" on the patient/decisionmaker signature line with an annotation by the MD/NP/PA saying "discussed via phone on (date)" then initialed. A detailed documentation of the phone call on a separate sheet can also be attached.

Some healthcare providers may be hesitant to honor a POLST without a physical signature, so every effort should be made to replace the "verbal consent" POLST with one that has physical signatures as quickly as possible.

Are verbal orders from providers valid? ([view who can sign in each state](#))

Similarly, verbal orders from the provider is permissible in accordance with facility/community policy. Best practice is to carefully document the conversation with the patient/decisionmaker with staff write something similar to "verbal order of provider" on the provider signature line with an annotation saying "discussed via phone on (date)" then initialed. A detailed documentation of the phone call on a separate sheet can also be attached.

Some healthcare providers may be hesitant to honor a POLST without a physical signature, so every effort should be made to replace the "verbal orders" POLST with one that has physical signatures as quickly as possible.

Can an out-of-state POLST form electronically signed be honored?

Generally, yes, so long as it is valid (with required signatures and dates). Check with your state contact to confirm (look up at www.polst.org/map; click on your state).

Overview:

- **POLST** is a process that helps identify a patient's wishes regarding medical treatment through conversation, after which the patient's treatment wishes are documented as a portable medical order, called a POLST Form. There are 16 names for POLST (MOLST, MOST, POST, etc.) so your state may use call it something else (see www.polst.org/map, bottom of the page). Read more: [Overview of POLST](#).
- **Appropriate Patients:** POLST is appropriate for patients who are considered to be at risk for a life-threatening clinical event because they have a serious life-limiting medical condition, which may include advanced frailty. See [here](#) more information and examples. *Healthy patients* should be encouraged to complete an advance directive ([How POLST Differs from Advance Directives](#))
- **Voluntary.** Forcing completion of POLST forms violates patient self-determination, informed consent and principles of person and family-centered care. Patients have a right to participate in medical decision-making regarding their treatment plan.
- **Not available everywhere.** It is up to each state to develop a POLST Program and some are just getting started. (see www.polst.org/map and click on your state for contact information to learn more)