National POLST
Technology Issue

A special newsletter dedicated to POLST Technology news, resources and recent publications.

Featured News

National POLST is excited and honored to be involved and included in the development of POLST technology standards, which will help ensure patient POLST data transmission across different systems, including EHRs and POLST registries, is accurate, timely, and secure.

National POLST is helping to develop interoperability standards
Thanks to the Office of the National Coordinator (ONC) for its longstanding support of our technology work and including us in work on POLST Clinical Document Architecture (CDA). Additionally, Amy Vandenbroucke, National POLST Executive Director, and Larry Garber, MD, Technology Committee member, will serve as consultants to Lantana, the company awarded the CDA contract. Technology Committee members Rim Cothren and Liz Umberfield are involved with a related Fast Healthcare Interoperability Resources (FHIR) project covering advance directives and POLST.

State of California commits 10M to California POLST Registry!
Governor Gavin Newsom signed the main 2021-2022 state budget bill (SB 129) which includes a $10 million appropriation for the California Emergency Medical Services Authority (EMSA) to develop a POLST eRegistry in consultation with the Coalition for Compassionate Care of California (CCCC) and other stakeholders. Learn more about California POLST and the California POLST Registry.

Featured Resources

POLST Technologies are increasingly recognized as a necessary development to help ensure patients who are seriously ill or frail have their wishes known and honored by health care professionals across systems.

National POLST Technology Guide
The Technology Guide is a consensus on best practices developed by dozens of experts working collaboratively with or as part of our Technology Committee. View Tech Guide web page or download PDF. We thank our sponsors for their support: The John A. Hartford Foundation, Vynca, California Health Care Foundation, The Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, The Coalition to Transform Advanced Care, The David and Lura Lovell Foundation, Colorado Regional Health Information Organization, Health-e-MedRecord.

ONGOING: POLST Technology Webinar Series
The Technology Webinar series provides context for each of the chapters of the Tech Guide. Register for the webinars and receive free CEs offered through our partner, Seasons Hospice & Palliative Care. Learn more: View Technology Guide web page webinars series PDF, or visit our webinars page, where past webinar recordings are available for viewing.

AVAILABLE Webinar! New Innovations: The New Oregon POLST Registry
Abby Dotson, National POLST Technology Advisor, presented "New Innovations: The New Oregon POLST Registry Platform Expands Access and Informs Quality Improvement," on July 14, hosted by Oregon POLST. She covered: A brief history of the Oregon POLST Registry and POLST form access; provider portal demo; EHR interoperability capabilities; EMS digital access to POLST database. Watch her presentation (YouTube).

National POLST: A resource for POLST Registry and POLST Technology updates
Did you know that National POLST maintains information on state POLST registries? Each year we survey all state programs for various data on their programs and we compile it in the form of maps, charts, and more. Find state POLST Registry information at our POLST Registry map (PDF) and our POLST Registry Matrix (PDF). Other maps and charts are posted on our Maps web page.

Featured Research

Several recent articles highlight the use of technology in end-of-life care, including a need for standardization across EHRs, and novel or improved tools and interfaces in the EHR, to improve health care that matches what patients want.

A Yet Unrealized Promise: Structured ACP Elements in the EHR
Lakin et al. analyzed Advance Care Planning (including Massachusetts MOLST) data as found across EHRs in 3 large health care systems. Only about half of the study patients had ACP documentation accessible in the EHR, and inaccuracies and duplication of data were common. A lack of validated data and lack of common standards for ACP data greatly suggest "a greater need for scrutiny, rigor and accountability of ACP data in the EHR." View article (limited access).

EHR Navigator Tool to Aid Communication in Pediatric EOL Care
Casas et al. describe the implementation and initial results using a novel EHR navigator tool that consolidates documents, code status orders, notes, and EOL flowsheets for seriously ill pediatric patients in Texas. Supporting documentation for code status changes increased by 35%, and social support staff (chaplains, social workers, child life specialists) became more involved, showing promise for such EHR tools in EOL care. View article (limited access).

Patient Portal Use among Seriously Ill Patients and Their Caregivers
Portz et al. characterized use among seriously ill patients and their caregivers in a large health care system. They found portal use varied by age, gender and race, with higher use among younger, male and white patients, possibly because there are more barriers to access for those who are older, female and non-white. Compared to the general patient population, portal use was high for those who were seriously ill or near the end of life. View article (limited access).

Telehealth Pilot in 8 New England Nursing Homes
Baxter et al. describe a telehealth pilot in which mobile technologies were used for nursing home resident palliative care consults. A POLST (MOLST) form could be completed on iPad, patient/family iPhone or email, after which it would be uploaded directly into the patent's electronic medical record (EMR). Authors concluded this was a promising first step in better meeting the needs of nursing home residents through the use of telehealth. View article (limited access).

Technology Industry Vendors!
Get involved. Your expertise matters to us. It benefits everyone, most of all patients, when we work together toward common goals, keeping in communication about best practices and evolving standards. Email amy@polst.org for vendor opportunities.

Thank you to our current Technology Committee Members
Rick Bassett (Chair), Keagen Brown (Vice Chair), Abby Dotson, Liz Umberfield, Larry Garber, Chelsey Patten, Atticus Speis, Katie Orem, Rim Cothren, Kelly Thompson, Charissa Yang and Danielle Funk (who just recently left the committee).