POLST Changes & Impact on Hospice Practice: An Opportunity
October 2017

POLST

Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment

Oregon Hospice & Palliative Care Association
Improving quality of life at the end of life.
What changes will impact Hospices?

➤ The Oregon POLST Registry—as of Oct. 13th, 2017--may now accept POLST forms signed by Verbal Order.

• Hospice staff will no longer have to wait for a POLST form to come back signed by a Provider before it can be FAXed to the POLST Registry.

• This allows the current POLST form to be accessed by EMS from the Registry much more quickly than in the past.

• This will prevent unwanted treatments (e.g. from previous POLST forms) from taking place.
Why is this important for Hospice patients in Oregon?

After recently reviewing death certificate data and the Oregon POLST Registry, two key facts emerged:

1. Half of all of those who are enrolled in hospice do not have a POLST form in the Oregon POLST Registry at the time of death.

2. Of the half who do have a POLST form in the Registry, 1/3 have a POLST form with orders to be admitted to the hospital (either Limited or Full Treatment)—likely many of these forms are outdated but they are guiding emergency treatment in a crisis.
How can Oregon Hospices ensure their patients’ wishes at the end of life are followed?

• By facilitating same-day submission of a completed POLST form to the POLST Registry.

• By returning the original POLST form to the patient’s home “ASAP”.
The other major changes impacting Hospice:

Effective January 1, 2018:
- New version of POLST form
- Naturopathic Physicians can sign POLST forms

List of Providers allowed to sign POLST forms:
- Physicians (M.D. or D.O.)
- Nurse Practitioners
- Physician Assistants
- Naturopathic Physicians
Acceptance of POLST forms signed by Verbal Order into the Oregon POLST Registry

**Logistics/Suggested Steps:**

1. A Hospice staff person assists a patient to complete the POLST form.

2. A Verbal Order for POLST is obtained from the Attending Physician/NP or by the Hospice Physician/NP

3. The Hospice staff person documents the Verbal Order ("VORB" or "VO" or "TO") with their name and role in the signature box, the date the order was authorized in the required Date field AND LEGIBLY prints the first and last name of the authorizing physician, with license number if possible, in the "Print Signing MD/DO/NP/PA/ND" row. This will allow easier and faster entry into the Registry.

4. The Hospice staff person then takes the POLST form and, using a FAX cover sheet, FAXes it to the Registry and returns the POLST form ASAP to the patient’s home.
Key Points to remember:

If the Provider’s name is **legibly** written, the license number does **not** have to be documented on the Verbal Order POLST form.

A FAX cover sheet **must** accompany the POLST form to enable the Registry Staff to contact the sender if there are any questions.

The POLST Registry FAX number (503-418-2161) is located on the back of the POLST form.

When the signed POLST form is available, it can then be FAXed to the POLST Registry and placed in the patient’s home, replacing the “Verbal Order” form.

Having a current POLST form in the Registry is the best way to ensure a patient’s current wishes are followed!