Are we completing POLST forms on the right patients?
POLST is for patients with advanced illness and frailty
## Key Differences between the Advance Directive Form and the POLST Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advance Directive</th>
<th>POLST</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A Voluntary Legal Document</strong></td>
<td><strong>A Voluntary Medical Order</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>For all adults regardless of health status at any age, starting at age 18</td>
<td>For those with serious illness, or frailty, or a limited prognosis at any age, depending on health status</td>
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| 1) Appoints a Health Care Representative  
2) Memorializes values and preferences  
3) Is signed by the principal | Is a specific medical order and is signed by a Health Care Professional. |
| Provides for theoretical situations in which a person may not have capacity for decision making. Guidelines for imagined future situations which may arise and for which a person may have preferences for a particular kind of care plan. | Provides for likely events that can be foreseen. Specific medical orders addressing defined medical interventions for situations that are likely to arise given the patient’s health status and prognosis. |
POLST is not needed for “healthy patients” going for short-term rehabilitation.
Instead, these patients should have orders for Full Code on their discharge orders.

Facility Code Status

Complete EITHER the order for Full Code OR a POLST form documenting limitations of care. A POLST form is NOT required for EVERY skilled nursing facility discharge.

Who Should Have a POLST Form?
The POLST form is designed for seriously ill or frail patients. To determine whether a POLST form should be considered, clinicians should ask themselves: “Would I be surprised if this patient died or lost decision-making capacity in the next 1-2 years? If the answer is, “No, I would not be surprised,” then a goals-of-care discussion and advance care planning with POLST is appropriate to consider. Use of the POLST form to limit treatment is not appropriate for patients with stable medical or functionally disabling problems who have many years of life expectancy.
Completing POLST in healthy patients can cause harm
POLST should be offered to those with advanced illness or frailty.

Advanced Directive forms should be offered to patients without serious advanced illness.