

Nevada POLST Post

April 2017



The Nevada POLST is Changing - Part I

The Nevada Legislature is in full swing and it seems Nevada POLST legislation will be changing. Fortunately, at this point, it seems things are moving in exactly the direction we had hoped.

Back in August of last year, the Legislative Committee on Health Care heard testimony from Sally Hardwick (President, Nevada POLST) and Peggy Ewald (Secretary, Nevada POLST) regarding the status of the Nevada POLST program and how it might be improved. From this presentation, despite several concerns expressed by a few committee members (see [Nevada POLST Post, Sept. 2016](#)), the Committee decided to grant Nevada POLST one of its few and very desirable BDRs (Bill Draft Revision).

A BDR is the first step to becoming law and provides a first draft of legislation. The Legislative Health Care Committee's BDR became bill AB93 (Assembly Bill 93) sponsored by the Assembly Committee on Health and Human Services.

AB93 had many of the revisions we had hoped to see, but it did not authorize APRNs and PAs to execute Nevada POLST forms among other things. Committee Chairman, Assemblyman Mike Sprinkle (D-District 30, Sparks), a paramedic, understood our concerns regarding APRNs and PAs and planned a hearing very early in the session.

However, before the hearing occurred, Assemblywoman Melissa Woodbury (R-District 23, Las Vegas) and Senator Dr. Joseph Hardy (R-District 12, Boulder

City) introduced AB199. AB199 is more comprehensive and contains most all of the recommendations we sought. Assemblyman Sprinkle consequently withheld introduction of AB93 awaiting the disposition of AB199.

One of the major hurdles of AB199 is the inclusion of PAs to be able to sign a Nevada POLST form. Because they have been actively promoting their inclusion, it seems most legislators were comfortable with the inclusion of APRNs.

However, PAs were not represented in any of the preliminary actions. Just days before the first hearing, Julie Thomas, MS, PA-C, DFAAPA (Academic Coordinator Physician Assistant Studies Program and Assistant Professor, Department of Family and Community Medicine UNR), contacted Nevada POLST and offered to testify. Then, serendipitously, the morning of the hearing Sally Hardwick held a POLST training at Carson Tahoe Medical Center and happened to mention the lack of PA representation. Dr. Sandra Koch, Carson Tahoe Medical Group, approached Sally and asked if her PA, Lara St. John, might testify in favor of AB199.

In addition to the two PAs, Barry Gold of AARP, Peggy Ewald, RN, CCMd of Geriatric Specialty Care (and Nevada POLST Treasurer) testified along with Nevada POLST President, Sally Hardwick. The testimonies were excellent and presented the case for PAs very effectively. Good discussion with the Committee members followed with no opposition.

However, from this presentation it became apparent that some language remained to be revised. Suggestions were made and there has been some follow-up with Nevada POLST on these recommendations. Nevada POLST has supported all the recommended revisions to this point. However, things may change at any moment with an amendment or other change of language. Such is the legislative process.

We are very pleased with the progress and changes thus far. But, we must not be complacent. We have only achieved what we have because of the close and constant watch we've kept on this bill.

In fact, as this is sent, there is a work session in which language is reviewed. To track progress and see much more information regarding this bill use this [link](#). To see the current version of the bill, click the link next to "Bill Text", about 3/4 way down the page.

Please check this link regularly as this bill has a ways to go before it is law and there may be many revisions still to come.

For more information on this and any other bill, you may create Personalized Legislative Tracking from the link offered on the right panel of the [Legislature](#) page.

Please, right now, email your support for **AB 199** to these critical legislators:

- Assemblywoman, [Melissa Woodbury](#), Sponsor
- Senator [Joe Hardy, MD](#), Co-Sponsor
- Assemblywoman, [Irene Bustamante](#), Committee Chair

The Nevada POLST is Changing - Part II

Nevada POLST, the non-profit, was established in 2013 by a group of very committed individuals. Sally Hardwick was elected President, coming out of retirement to continue the work she had begun on the Nevada POLST as Director of the Nevada Center for Ethics & Health Policy. Although the Nevada POLST Board is very committed, all members have other full time positions, so the day-to-day work of the organization is the responsibility of the President.

To relieve some of the duties of the President, discussions were undertaken with the Nevada Division of Health and Human Services. It was agreed that ordering and processing of Nevada POLST forms could be transferred to them.

This was initiated at the beginning of the year. There are now several ways to obtain Nevada POLST forms. You may use the link from [our website](#) or the website of the [Division of Health and Human Services](#).

Orders may be picked up in person at two locations (please let them know you are coming). We are hoping additional locations will be added at a later date:

- Las Vegas: 4220 S. Maryland Pkwy., Suite 810, Bldg. D, 89119; Phone: 702-486-6515 or,
- Carson City: 727 Fairview Drive, Suite E, 89701; Phone: 775-684-1030

Orders may also be placed using a FedEx account number through the [Division of Health and Human Services](#).

Because this is a new system and collaboration between Nevada POLST and the State, we would like to know your experience. Has this new service worked well for you? Has it improved or made receiving POLST forms easier? Have you had any challenges? Please let us know so we may improve it as necessary. Send [Sally an email](#) and let her know how your order processing has gone.

Tell Us a Story

Tell us about your experience with POLST. We want to hear the good, the bad and the ugly...and the terrific!

Please send your stories to Sally Hardwick at sph@nevadapolst.org. She will assure they are considered as the POLST legislation and revised form are developed.

Recommendations for Integrating POLST Forms with Electronic Health Records (EHRs)

It is critical for health care professionals to have access to POLST Forms during a medical emergency when the patient lacks capacity. Electronic health/medical record systems (EHRs) create the ability for POLST Forms to be immediately accessible. As EHRs are being increasingly adopted, health care facilities must consider how best to 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 within 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, the National POLST Paradigm Task Force (NPPTF) strongly encourages facilities to develop an ePOLST.

NPPTF has approved the following recommendations:

1. 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.
2. The unique POLST filed within the inpatient and outpatient EHR contains only POLST medical orders and is independent of the advance directive information.
3. The EHR system has the ability to rapidly receive and accurately store older versions clearly demarcated as voided and display the most recent document.
4. 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.]

Questions Corner

Send your questions to Nevada POLST. We will share the answer to assure this program is a success for patients, their loved ones and providers.

Why is the date of birth (DOB) on the POLST form in the format of dd/mm/yr?

Unfortunately, despite many, many reviews the format for the date of birth is as is commonly used in European countries and the military. In the US, convention is mm/dd/yr. In order to avoid confusion or eliminate inaccurate information, please writing the month abbreviated, then the rest of the birth date. For example, Feb. 3, 1944 instead of 2/3/44 since, if you follow the form's format, that would mean March 2, 1944! So, please write the abbreviated month and that will clarify for all. We regret this and assure that it will be changed in our first revision.

When will the Nevada POLST be revised?

The legislative changes we anticipate in the next few months will require several changes to the Nevada POLST form. Once legislation is complete, we can start work on revising the form. Your recommendations are welcomed and appreciated. When we have the form finalized, it must then be approved by the State, which takes "awhile" as well. Our best guess is, we will have a new POLST form by the end of 2017.

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Just click and shop! <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/46-5120086>. You can set up to automatically shop Amazon Smiles (the donation version) by bookmarking smile.amazon.com.

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

Additional recommendations for ePOLST systems:

1. Standards for wording and printing in ePOLST systems should align with POLST Forms designed by Nevada POLST and/or state agencies.
2. ePOLST systems must allow for a paper version to be printed. This paper version should be identical to current paper POLST forms approved by the state.
3. The ePOLST system should be able to easily update language and formatting to match updated paper POLST Forms approved by the State. Since patients are not required to update their POLST Forms whenever an update of the POLST Form language occurs, EHR systems must be able to display current POLST Forms with older formats and language in addition to the updated format and language.
4. ePOLST should use a documentation method which confirms that both the health care professional and patient/surrogate have validated the contents of the ePOLST in accordance with applicable EHR regulations and Nevada law.
5. Optimally, the ePOLST system should provide access to educational materials that facilitate shared informed medical decision-making and accurate completion of the form.
6. Encourage all EHR vendors and third parties developing ePOLST systems to work collaboratively towards a universal and standardized program that represents best practices for access and interoperability for all EHR users.
7. Encourage expansion of system-wide thinking to include connections with registries, statewide or regional central POLST completion systems, and emergency services systems.
8. Development should consider the eventual compatibility with a statewide EHR system. Therefore, the ePOLST system should allow export of POLST Forms to the Secretary of State's [Living Will Lockbox](#) for storage and authorized access of forms. Accepted interoperability standards should be used.

For more information on national POLST Programs, visit POLST.org or for information on the Nevada POLST program, visit nevadapolst.org.

Our website provides:

- [Sample POLST forms](#)
- [Starting "The Conversation" tips](#)
- [Links to POLST research](#)
- [Decision guides to explain treatment options](#)

And MUCH more. Visit our site at www.nevadapolst.org