

# Nevada POLST Post

## Issue I - 2022



### Common Mistakes that Invalidate a Nevada POLST

The Nevada POLST board is concerned with providing education to patients and health care providers. The Nevada POLST is defined in Nevada law (see NRS 449A.500 to 449A.581, inclusive).

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CHPCA GCHCE HEC-C, Director of Palliative Care & Clinical Ethics for Renown Health System and Dr. Shelby L. Schiller, LCSW  
Clinical Therapist at Intermountain Healthcare have provided some common errors that may invalidate, or at least confound or confuse treatment by providers, using this important medical order.

- *A patient is told that they must sign a POLST.* This is incorrect. The POLST form is *voluntary*. An advance directive is always recommended for all adults to choose a health care representative, if they become incapacitated. The POLST form is recommended in addition to an advance directive for a patient in very frail health or with early dementia.
- *The healthcare agent signs the form when the patient has capacity.* The provider must determine patient capacity. If “has decisional capacity” (Section D) is checked, the patient must sign the form.
- *The back of the form is not filled out.* To prevent misinterpretation, the form should be filled out completely, front and back. The DPOA for healthcare should be taken directly from the advance directive if one exists. If simply asked, a patient may not realize this is a legal designation and may mistakenly provide a different name than is on the official DPOA document, which could result in significant legal jeopardy.
- “Attempt Resuscitation” (Section A) and “Full Treatment” (Section B) includes a note to decline intubation. Partial codes are not an option. Attempt resuscitation must include all modalities.
- Two physicians sign a POLST to make the patient a Do Not Resuscitate (DNR). This is not valid, not legal and is not the purpose of the POLST.

It is the responsibility of the provider signing the POLST form to assure the accuracy of both the process of completion and content of the POLST form.

### CMEs and CUEs Now Available Online

Your Nevada POLST training just got even more convenient! The University of Nevada, Reno School of Medicine (UNSOM) now offers online CMEs and CEUs on the Nevada POLST program, which qualifies for 1 (CME ethics) credit. Nevada POLST is a statutory program to be provided to all patients whose provider suspects may not survive another year. To learn the history, completion and legal implications of this program, you may register online at [https://med.unr.edu/cme/cmeonlinelibrary/nv\\_polst](https://med.unr.edu/cme/cmeonlinelibrary/nv_polst) or click [here](#).

The fee is \$30. CEUs and CMEs are available to physicians, nurses, APRNs and PAs.

The same content is available at no charge, but without CEUs/CMEs on our [website](#) (see Online Training Videos article below). For additional information regarding Nevada POLST go to [www.nevadapolst.org](http://www.nevadapolst.org) or click [here](#).

### Online Training Videos

If information is what you need and not CMEs or CEUs, you can now watch our [online videos](#), which are the same as those presented by UNSOM (see article above).

The trainings (either for CMEs/CEUs or without) are divided into four modules. If viewed on our website (without continuing education credits) you may learn sequentially or randomly choose your topic. You may find a few minor imperfections; these were created by our board members, not professionally produced, so please forgive these peccadillos. The information is accurate and dependable. The modules and their content are as follows:

#### Module #1

- The history of POLST
- The difference between Nevada POLST and Advance Directives
- How to begin a POLST conversation
- How to be sure the POLST is available when needed

#### Module #2 - Completing the Nevada POLST Medical Order (Side 1 of the POLST form)

#### Module #3

- Completing Side 2 (Supplementary Information)
- Nevada Lockbox
- Surrogates vs. representatives
- Making changes or voiding a POLST
- Reimbursement for completing a POLST
- Spanish language POLST

#### Module #4

- Legal considerations
- Research supporting POLST

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## EMS and POLST

The following is a quick review of important points for EMS regarding Nevada POLST:

- Not every patient transferred will or should have a POLST order. The POLST is only for the frail elderly or those near the end of a life-limiting illness.
- The POLST should ONLY be consulted when life-sustaining measures need to be considered and the patient cannot express their wishes. Always ask if the patient has a POLST form or, in a residence, check the refrigerator or bedside table (patients are instructed to keep them there). On the form:
- FIRST: See if the POLST is signed and dated in Section E.
- NEXT, if the patient:
  - Is in cardiopulmonary arrest, check the orders in Section A (DNR). If “Allow Natural Death” is checked in Section A, do not resuscitate.
  - Is not in arrest, consult Section B (only one of the following subsections should be checked).
    - (a) If “Comfort-Focused Treatment” is checked, do not transport; make the patient and family comfortable. Contact hospice (if enrolled), clergy or other support services. Coach the family through the death. If circumstances require transfer, be SURE to take the POLST so that unwanted care is not administered at the hospital.
    - (b) If “Selective Treatment” is checked, follow these orders as appropriate to the patient’s status. Transfer as necessary.
    - (c) If “Full Treatment” is checked, provide all reasonable support, transfer as necessary.
- When a POLST patient is transported ALWAYS transfer the POLST form with the patient.

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For additional information about Nevada POLST, please see our website:

- [Sample POLST forms](#)
- [Starting “The Conversation” tips](#)
- [Step-by-Step Instructions](#)

And MUCH more. To visit our site go to [www.nevadapolst.org](http://www.nevadapolst.org)