

# Completing POLST in the AL or SNF



Patients entering ALs or SNFs are usually elderly or frail, and many have significant chronic diseases. Because of the necessity to understand patient/family wishes regarding emergency treatments, a code status is often sought by the facility on admission. The POLST form is often used for that purpose.

However, the POLST form offers other patient treatment options. These include: 1) Overall level of medical treatment desired 2) choices regarding artificial nutrition and antibiotics 3) any other patient preferences.

We recommend that the following steps be taken with patients/families entering ALs and SNFs to ensure that informed decisions are made on the POLST form by and for patients.

## Step 1

During the admission process whenever the code status is discussed, the nurse or SW should state the following: "It is very important that we understand for all of our patients what their preferences are regarding emergency treatment and other medical choices. We use a form entitled POLST, which stands for Provider Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment. The form is used throughout Minnesota. We have discussions with all of our residents or their decision makers about completing a POLST form so that we can follow their wishes."

*"I'd like you/your family first to watch a short video that explains the medical choices on the form. After you watch the video I'll go over the choices with you. If you're comfortable we can review the form and you can make whatever choices are right for you. If you have questions that you'd like to ask the Nurse Practitioner or Doctor about the form and what choices are right for you – that's absolutely fine."*

## Step 2

After viewing the video the patient/family return to the RN or SW for the **POLST conversation**.

## Step 3

The POLST form is completed and sent to the NP or MD for signature.

***It is critical that the NP and MD have viewed the video and conversation so that they can be confident that the patient/family have made informed choices.***

## Step 4

The POLST form is entered into the patient's medical record.