

## INSTRUCTIONS TO MANAGE POLST

**POLST (Portable Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment)** is an **out-of-hospital** medical order that communicates your emergency medical care wishes to first responders. It is designed to limit or specify specific life sustaining measures that are or are not acceptable to you based on your current health status.

**WHERE SHOULD I KEEP MY POLST?** You should keep your POLST on the front of your refrigerator/freezer door or on your bedroom door. This is where first responders (such as EMTs) will look for it in an emergency if they are called to your home or residence. You may also take a picture of the POLST and keep it in your phone for easy access by someone who is with you/caring for you when you are away from your home.

**WHO SHOULD I TELL I HAVE A POLST?** It's very important that you share your wishes documented on your POLST with your loved ones. Knowing what you want allows those who care for you to communicate and honor your wishes. You may also want to make sure there is a copy on file at any local hospital where you could receive care. (If you live in a state like Oregon or Idaho, your POLST may be uploaded to a statewide registry.)

**WHAT IF I SPEND A SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT OF TIME SOMEWHERE ELSE?** Taking your advance care planning documents, including the POLST, with you when you travel is a great idea. If you spend time in other parts of the country on a regular basis, take your document with you and display it on your refrigerator/freezer door or bedroom where you stay. You may also want to give a copy to the hospital near where you are staying where you are likely to get care.

**WHAT DO I DO IF I CHANGE MY MIND ABOUT MY WISHES?** If you change your mind about your wishes, you can always change your POLST. Go to your care provider and tell them you want to change it. They can help you complete a new POLST that reflects your current wishes. They will void your old POLST. You will want to make sure to give updated copies to anywhere you've previously shared the POLST with.

**WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT MY POLST?** Call your care provider's office and let them know you have questions. You can also contact someone with the Washington State POLST Program at [WashingtonPOLST.org](http://WashingtonPOLST.org) or [info@washingtonpolst.org](mailto:info@washingtonpolst.org).

Please note, the POLST form "code status" applies outside of the hospital (for example: would you want or would you not want CPR if you had a cardiac arrest outside of the hospital). If you are in the hospital or having a planned medical procedure you will be asked to clarify your wishes for in-hospital situations and may be required to be a "full code" during surgery.