

Should I Have a POLST?

A POLST is a medical order that communicates your wishes for medical intervention to first responders in an emergency outside of the hospital. A POLST is most often used when someone wants to limit emergency medical intervention.

A POLST is intended for those who are living with advanced serious illness, medical frailty or are at end of life where full emergency medical care may not benefit and could cause harm. It is also used when life-saving treatments and potential results from this treatment do not align with a person's personal values or goals.

One of the most common reasons for a POLST is to communicate that a person wishes to be allowed a natural death in the event of a cardiac arrest outside of a hospital setting. The POLST communicates a request for a Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) intervention. The POLST can also communicate a wish to limit other medical interventions outside of the hospital and/or a wish to avoid transferring to the hospital at all.

Questions which may help you decide if you need a POLST at this time:

- In your current state of health, if 911 is called to your home, **do you want emergency medics to do all they can to save your life**, stabilize you and get you to a hospital?

If yes, you do not need a POLST. However, we recommend an advance directive to name the person you trust to make medical decisions for you if you cannot make them for yourself and to guide your care in the hospital.

- In your current state of health, if 911 is called to your home, **would you prefer to avoid certain medical interventions**, to allow a natural death, avoid ICU level of care or avoid hospital transfer?

If yes, you should consult your health care provider about a POLST.

Examples of statements or values that mean you may need a POLST:

"I don't want to go back to the hospital."

"I don't ever want to end up in the ICU (Intensive Care Unit) or on a ventilator for even a short period of time."

"If I die, just let me go"

"I want to be allowed to die a natural death while I am in my home or other setting outside of the hospital."

Please note: The POLST is intended to guide treatment outside a hospital setting. You can choose a different level of care if/when you are in the hospital.