San Joaquin County
Emergency Medical Services Agency

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Policy Memorandum No. 2012-01

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TO: All Prehospital Personnel and Providers
Base Hospital Personnel
Emergency Department Physicians and Nurse Liaisons

FROM: Richard N. Buys, M.D., Medical Director
Dan Burch, EMS Administrator

SUBJ.: DNR and POLST

The purpose of this Policy Memorandum is to provide an update to EMS Agency Policy No. 5105 Do Not Resuscitate Orders as it pertains to a recently developed DNR instrument known as the Physician's Order for Life Sustaining Treatment (POLST) Form.

EMS personnel shall honor a valid POLST form as an addition to EMS Policy No. 5105 Do Not Resuscitate Orders, Section I, D.

The POLST Form was added to California's Probate Code as an alternative to the current EMS Authority/California Medical Association Prehospital DNR Form. The POLST Form is a physician's order that is intended to cross multiple healthcare settings, whereas the DNR form may not be universally accepted in the hospital setting because the title uses the term "prehospital."

The POLST Form contains three sections that allow the patient to:

1. Choose resuscitation or not;
2. Specify other life sustaining treatments such as comfort measures, limited medical interventions, or full treatment;
3. Specify if they want artificial nutrition.

A copy of the POLST form is included as pages two and three of this memorandum.
Please distribute this Policy Memorandum to all EMS personnel, base hospital personnel and emergency department personnel

HIPAA PERMITS DISCLOSURE OF POLST TO OTHER HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS AS NECESSARY

Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment (POLST)

EMSA #111 B
(Effective 1/1/2009)

First follow these orders, then contact physician. This is a Physician Order Sheet based on the person's current medical condition and wishes. Any section not completed implies full treatment for that section. Everyone shall be treated with dignity and respect.

Last Name	
First /Middle Name	
Date of Birth	Date Form Prepared

A — CARDIOPULMONARY RESUSCITATION (CPR): *Person has no pulse and is not breathing.*

Check One

☐ **Attempt Resuscitation/CPR** ☐ **Do Not Attempt Resuscitation/DNR** (Allow Natural Death)
(Section B: Full Treatment required)

When not in cardiopulmonary arrest, follow orders in **B** and **C**.

B — MEDICAL INTERVENTIONS: *Person has pulse and/or is breathing.*

Check One

☐ **Comfort Measures Only** Use medication by any route, positioning, wound care and other measures to relieve pain and suffering. Use oxygen, suction and manual treatment of airway obstruction as needed for comfort. Antibiotics only to promote comfort. ***Transfer*** *if comfort needs cannot be met in current location.*

☐ **Limited Additional Interventions** Includes care described above. Use medical treatment, antibiotics, and IV fluids as indicated. Do not intubate. May use non-invasive positive airway pressure. Generally avoid intensive care.

☐ ***Do Not Transfer to hospital for medical interventions. Transfer*** if comfort needs cannot be met in current location.

☐ **Full Treatment** Includes care described above. Use intubation, advanced airway interventions, mechanical ventilation, and defibrillation/cardioversion as indicated. ***Transfer*** *to hospital if indicated. Includes intensive care.*

Additional Orders: _____

_____

C — ARTIFICIALLY ADMINISTERED NUTRITION: *Offer food by mouth if feasible and desired.*

Check One

☐ No artificial nutrition by tube. ☐ Defined trial period of artificial nutrition by tube.

☐ Long-term artificial nutrition by tube.

Additional Orders: _____

D — SIGNATURES AND SUMMARY OF MEDICAL CONDITION:

Discussed with:

☐ Patient ☐ Health Care Decisionmaker ☐ Parent of Minor ☐ Court Appointed Conservator ☐ Other:

Signature of Physician

My signature below indicates to the best of my knowledge that these orders are consistent with the person's medical condition and preferences.

Print Physician Name	Physician Phone Number	Date
Physician Signature (required)	Physician License #	

Signature of Patient, Decisionmaker, Parent of Minor or Conservator

By signing this form, the legally recognized decisionmaker acknowledges that this request regarding resuscitative measures is consistent with the known desires of, and with the best interest of, the individual who is the subject of the form.

Signature (required)	Name (print)	Relationship (write self if patient)

Summary of Medical Condition	Office Use Only

SEND FORM WITH PERSON WHENEVER TRANSFERRED OR DISCHARGED

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Patient Name (last, first, middle)	Date of Birth	Gender: M F
Patient Address		

Contact Information

Health Care Decisionmaker	Address		Phone Number
Health Care Professional Preparing Form	Preparer Title	Phone Number	Date Prepared

Directions for Health Care Professional

Completing POLST

- Must be completed by health care professional based on patient preferences and medical indications.
- POLST must be signed by a physician and the patient/decisionmaker to be valid. Verbal orders are acceptable with follow-up signature by physician in accordance with facility/community policy.
- Certain medical conditions or medical treatments may prohibit a person from residing in a residential care facility for the elderly.
- Use of original form is strongly encouraged. Photocopies and FAXes of signed POLST forms are legal and valid.

Using POLST

- Any incomplete section of POLST implies full treatment for that section.

Section A:

- No defibrillator (including automated external defibrillators) should be used on a person who has chosen "Do Not Attempt Resuscitation."

Section B:

- When comfort cannot be achieved in the current setting, the person, including someone with "Comfort Measures Only," should be transferred to a setting able to provide comfort (e.g., treatment of a hip fracture).
- IV medication to enhance comfort may be appropriate for a person who has chosen "Comfort Measures Only."
- Non-invasive positive airway pressure includes continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP), bi-level positive airway pressure (BiPAP), and bag valve mask (BVM) assisted respirations.
- Treatment of dehydration prolongs life. A person who desires IV fluids should indicate "Limited Interventions" or "Full Treatment."

Reviewing POLST

It is recommended that POLST be reviewed periodically. Review is recommended when:

- The person is transferred from one care setting or care level to another, or
- There is a substantial change in the person's health status, or
- The person's treatment preferences change.

Modifying and Voiding POLST

- A person with capacity can, at any time, void the POLST form or change his/her mind about his/her treatment preferences by executing a verbal or written advance directive or a new POLST form.
- To void POLST, draw a line through Sections A through D and write "VOID" in large letters. Sign and date this line.
- A health care decisionmaker may request to modify the orders based on the known desires of the individual or, if unknown, the individual's best interests.

This form is approved by the California Emergency Medical Services Authority in cooperation with the statewide POLST Task Force.

For more information or a copy of the form, visit **www.capolst.org**.

SEND FORM WITH PERSON WHENEVER TRANSFERRED OR DISCHARGED