

Planning for your medical decisions

POLST

A POLST is different from an Advance Directive for Health Care.

POLST stands for “portable orders for life-sustaining treatment.” It is a voluntary form that turns your wishes for treatment into a medical order. A POLST is meant for people with a serious illness, such as advanced heart disease, advanced lung disease, or cancer that has spread. It is also for people who are older and frail and might not want all medical treatments.

There are important differences between a POLST and an Advance Directive for Health Care. The differences are explained [here](#). It is recommended that all adults complete an Advance Directive, regardless of their age or health. An Advance Directive is a legal form you can complete on your own or with the help of an attorney. A POLST is a medical form to be completed with your doctor or health care professional. Watch this [video](#) to learn when is the right time to complete a POLST.

A POLST creates medical orders regarding CPR and end-of-life treatment.

If you are nearing the end of life, you can complete a POLST with your doctor to express your wishes regarding attempts at resuscitation and the extent of any further medical interventions. In situations when you have no pulse and are not breathing, you can receive cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) or not (DNR). If you have a pulse and are breathing, you can choose one of three options for medical intervention:

- 1) Comfort Measures Only/Allow Natural Death. The plan is to maximize comfort through symptom management. This box should be checked if a person’s goal is to maximize comfort and prefers not to go to the hospital.
- 2) Limited Treatment. The plan is to go to the hospital if needed but to avoid mechanical ventilation and generally avoid the intensive care unit (ICU). Examples include going to the hospital for dehydration or for pneumonia.
- 3) Full Treatment. This includes all life-sustaining treatments possible, including intubation, advanced airway intervention, and mechanical ventilation.

Learn more.

You can learn more about the POLST by speaking to your doctor or by visiting <https://oregonpolst.org/>.

<https://oregonwings.org/get-a-life-plan>

