A patient with decision-making capacity may change his/her POLST choices and complete a new POLST form.

In order for a POLST form to be valid, the signatures that are required on the form are those of the doctor and that of the patient or his/her legal representative.

CPR is performed when a person is unconscious, and their heart and breathing have stopped.

POLST gives instructions for care that all health care providers are legally required to follow.

If a patient has an older “IDPH Uniform DNR Advance Directive” and then completes an “IDPH Uniform DNR Advance Directive/POLST form, instructions on both forms should be considered.

Every adult should have a POLST form.

A person who has chosen Do Not Attempt Resuscitation in Section A of the IDPH Uniform DNR Advance Directive/POLST form may also select Full Treatment, such as intubation or mechanical ventilation, in Section B.

A person who has chosen CPR in Section A of IDPH Uniform DNR Advance Directive/POLST form will receive all medically indicated treatments in a pre-arrest emergency, i.e. Full Treatment in Section B, even if Comfort Care or Limited Additional Interventions are selected on the form.

CPR is equally effective in all people.

For ease of locating it, especially at home or in nursing homes, it is recommended that POLST forms be printed on “Ultra Pink” paper, but a POLST on any color paper is valid.

A patient presents in cardiac arrest and his wife provides the EMTs with two forms, one earlier IDPH DNR Advance Directive form, dated 3/16/10 and one revised IDPH DNR Advanced Directive/POLST form dated 3/27/2013. The options chosen on the two forms conflict. The EMT should honor the more recent form.

The IDPH Uniform DNR Advance Directive/POLST form is best used for patients with advanced illness or with the frail elderly.

Selection of Do Not Attempt Resuscitation in section A implies that the patient also does not want aggressive treatments in case of a pre-arrest emergency, and would not want artificial nutrition by tube under any circumstances.

POLST does not replace a Power of Attorney for Health Care document.

POLST is an evidence-based model that is being enacted in almost every other state.

(Adapted from version created by Catherine E. McGregor, RN, MSN, FNS, Sutter Auburn Faith Hospital, CA.)

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