



## LEGAL Q&A

**Q** What is a POLST form, and how is it used within a patient's medical record?

**A** New Jersey's Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment Act ("POLST Act") was recently enacted. It will allow patients to make preferences concerning life-sustaining treatment or other interventions known in advance. The POLST form may be used for individuals who (1) have advanced chronic progressive illness; or (2) a life expectancy of less than five years; or (3) otherwise wish to further define health care preferences. The POLST form is intended to accompany the patient, and be honored across the full range of health care settings, including the patient's home, a health care facility, or otherwise. It will become part of the patient's medical record.

A POLST form will contain immediately actionable, signed medical orders on a standardized form that will address a range of life-sustaining interventions as well as the preferred intensity of treatment for each intervention. The standardized POLST form that will be used in New Jersey is currently under development, but is likely to be modeled on forms created for use in other states.



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