Hospital Policy
(Example may be useful as guide in developing policies in this state)

CLINICAL POLICY

Physician Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment

POLICY

POLST (Physician Order for Life-Sustaining Treatment) is a form recognized throughout Oregon as a means to communicate physician and nurse practitioner orders for life-sustaining treatments. Individual state laws may differ in its support for POLST. The order addresses decisions related to resuscitation, tube feedings, antibiotics, and the use of intensive care. OHSU honors a POLST form or a copy of the form unless/until we receive orders to the contrary.

All conversations with patients or their surrogate decision makers that involve decisions regarding the use of life-sustaining treatments must be documented in the patient's medical record. If there is disagreement or conflict among family members, providers, or others regarding a POLST and the patient's wishes, providers should refer to Health Care System policies.

PROCEDURE

For Patients who Arrive at the Hospital with a Completed POLST Form

When a patient is admitted with a completed POLST form, the form must be scanned into the electronic medical record, a copy placed in the medical record in the red transparent pocket, and the original document returned to the patient. The provider will review the POLST and verify with the patient his/her current wishes. The provider will then write admission orders in accordance with current patient wishes.

For Patients who Arrive at the Hospital without a Completed POLST Form

Prior to discharge to either another facility (i.e., longer term care facility, hospice setting, foster home, or another hospital), or to home with a discharge plan that includes at-home hospice services, a POLST form must be completed.

The completed POLST form must be scanned into the electronic medical record, a copy placed in the medical record in the red transparent pocket, and the original document returned to the patient to accompany him/her during transport.

Discharging Patients who arrived with a POLST form

At discharge the POLST orders must be reviewed and verified with the patient/surrogate. If the POLST form remains valid as previously written, notation should be made that the POLST has been reviewed and remains valid. If it has
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not already been done, the current form must be scanned into the electronic medical record and a hard copy placed in the red transparent pocket of the medical record.

If the patient/surrogate requests changes to a POLST, a new form must be completed and signed. The non-current version and/or copy will be noted as rescinded, removed from the red transparent pocket and placed in the correspondence section of the medical record with the word "VOID" written across the front of the outdated form. The new POLST form must be scanned into the electronic record, a hard copy placed in the red transparent pocket of the medical record, and the new original document returned to the patient to accompany him/her to their next care setting.

Bibliography:

- Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment, Guidance for Health Care Providers. Developed by the Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment Task Force, 1997. Center of Ethics in Health Care, OHSU