

Notice of Change in New Hampshire POLST Form

Dear Colleague:

POLST Forms ordered as of May 2023 have been updated and are now titled **New Hampshire POLST Form: A Portable Medical Order**. Forms printed since July 2021 have been titled National POLST Form: A Portable Medical Order. *Those forms are still valid if accompanied by a Pink P-DNR Form for patients requesting DNR status.* We also recommend that a P-DNR Form accompany the newly titled New Hampshire POLST Form until POLST is more widely understood.

The Healthcare Decisions Coalition voted to adopt the National POLST form in 2021 at the same time that amendments were made to [Chapter 137-J WRITTEN DIRECTIVES FOR MEDICAL DECISION MAKING FOR ADULTS WITHOUT CAPACITY TO MAKE HEALTH CARE DECISIONS \(state.nh.us\)](#). At that time, POLST was introduced into the statute as a portable, actionable DNR order. Portable Medical Orders from other states will be honored here, but only NH licensed providers (MD, DO, APRN or PA) can authorize POLST or P-DNR orders in New Hampshire.

Adopting the National POLST form in 2021 meant that the form could not be altered in any way. A standard had to be met in keeping the form exactly the same in all states. Because of this, wording required by our newly amended state statute was not on the form. A decision was made this year to add the necessary language without changing the format from the National Form. This required renaming the form but still allows for consistency of the content. We had been among only five states using the National POLST form due to the number of states wrestling with the same desire to use a common form while also complying with statutory differences.

Points to consider:

- Remember that a POLST serves two functions, **that of care plan** *and* that of Emergency Response Orders.
- Prior forms will still be valid if used with the P-DNR Form, but the care plan should be reviewed and updated to the newest form as health status changes occur.
- Orders to the Foundation for Healthy Communities will be filled with the newest version of the form at a cost commensurate with our printing expense. [Order Form – FHC \(healthynh.org\)](https://www.healthynh.org)
- The Foundation will release these forms only to licensed providers (MD, DO, APRN & PA) to prevent consumer error. A form completed by a consumer with no authorizing provider signature, is NOT VALID or actionable, and may result in interventions that contradict patient wishes for care.
- Other states continue to have their own “version” of the form and many states retain their own title, such as MOLST, or COLST for this set of orders. All are required to be printed on durable stock in a striking color; most use pink, but since pink was already “taken” by New Hampshire’s portable DNR form, we use yellow.

- A New Hampshire POLST Form contains a DNR order, which, if elected by the patient, conforms to the statute's requirement for a portable DNR. The statute also authorizes New Hampshire providers to recognize and act on POLST orders written out-of-state.
- We will continue to provide training opportunities for those in positions that require engaging in POLST discussions with patients. Please check our website Healthynh.org for training dates.
- We encourage you to track the use of POLST forms in your facility or system to ensure quality standards for honoring patient goals of care.

The Health Care Decisions Coalition and the Foundation for Healthy Communities thanks you for taking the time to address advance care planning with your patients and families. Compassionate conversations with a trusted health care team is vital to us all.

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