



CALIFORNIA HEALTHCARE FOUNDATION

What We Know About POLST in California

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POLST Evaluation by UCLA, 2010-2013

Site of Care	Data Source(s)
Nursing homes	Survey and MDS
Hospitals	Survey of 286 hospitals
EMS providers	Survey of 20 LEMSA administrators
POLST community coalitions	Annual reports to CHCF and survey

MDS: Minimum Data Set www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/lnc/pages/mds.aspx

EMS: Emergency Medical Services

LEMSA: Local Emergency Medical Services Agencies

CHCF: California HealthCare Foundation

Introduction

- POLST is widely used in California
- Challenges with completing form and making sure it travels with the patient
- One solution to these challenges: A POLST registry

POLST Use in California Nursing Homes, 2011

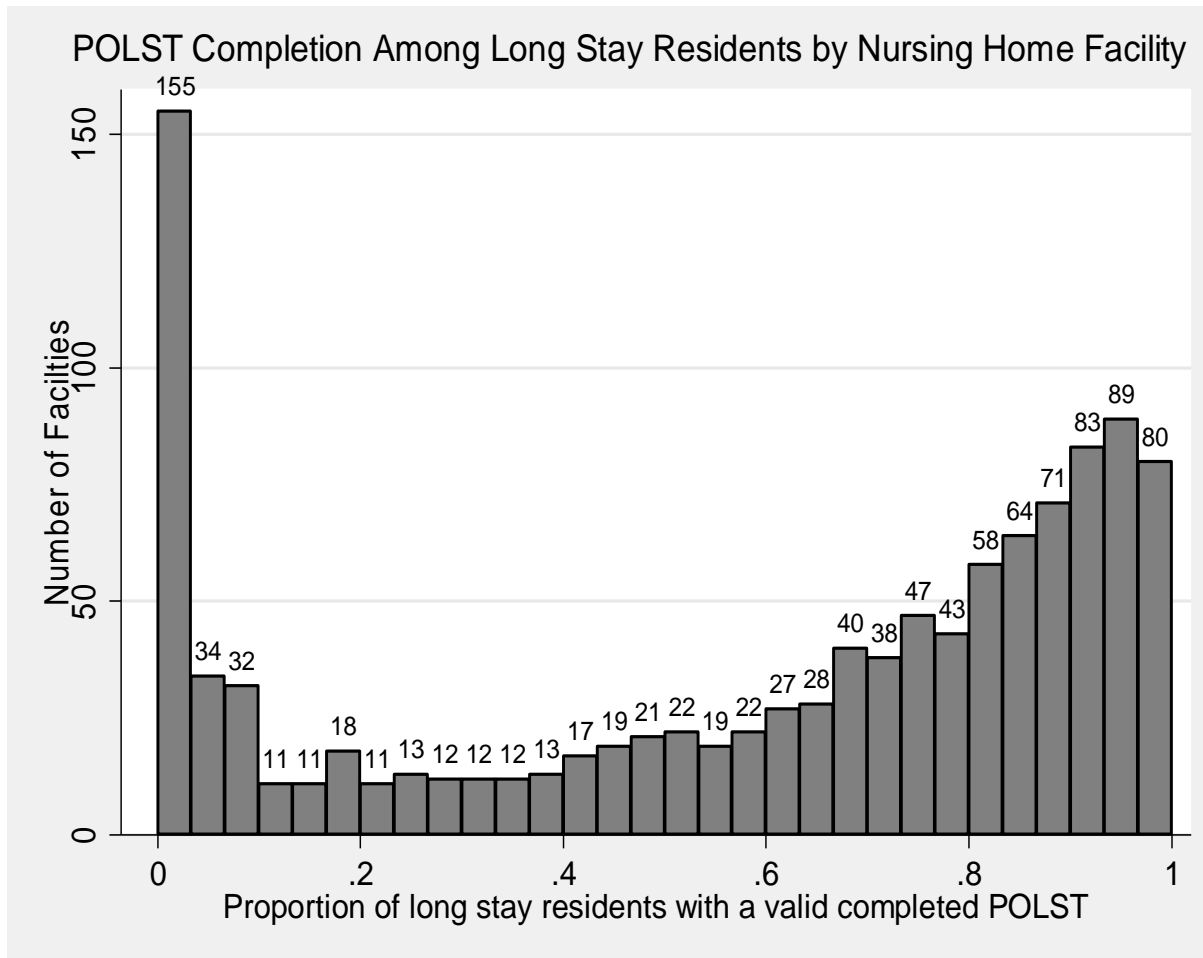
California nursing home residents = 296,276

POLST completed = 181,410 residents (63%)

- Valid POLST with all signatures: 142,672 residents (49%)
- POLST with at least one signature missing: 38,738 residents (13%)

Source: 2011 Nursing Home Minimum Data Set
www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/lnc/pages/mds.aspx.

Variation in POLST Use and Handling in California Nursing Homes



N=1,122 facilities

Excludes 98 facilities with <20 long-stay residents

Source: 2011 Nursing Home Minimum Data Set
www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/lnc/pages/mds.aspx

Issues with POLST reported by California Nursing Homes, 2012

Nearly all of 290 nursing home respondents reported a problem with POLST implementation

Top two problems that could be addressed by a POLST registry:

- Not receiving the POLST form back from other facilities
- Receiving incomplete or incorrect POLST form from another facility

Wenger NS, et al: Implementation of Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment in nursing homes in California: evaluation of a novel statewide dissemination mechanism. J Gen Intern Med. 2013;28:51-7.

Issues with POLST reported by California Hospitals, 2011

Of 286 hospital respondents, 47% reported a problem with POLST implementation

Top three problems that could be addressed by a POLST registry:

- POLST does not contain required signatures
- POLST incomplete
- POLST incorrectly completed

Sugiyama T, Zingmond D, Lorenz KA, et al. Implementing Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment in California hospitals: Factors associated with adoption. J Am Geriatr Soc. 2013;61:1337-44.

Issues with POLST reported by Local Emergency Management Service Areas, 2013

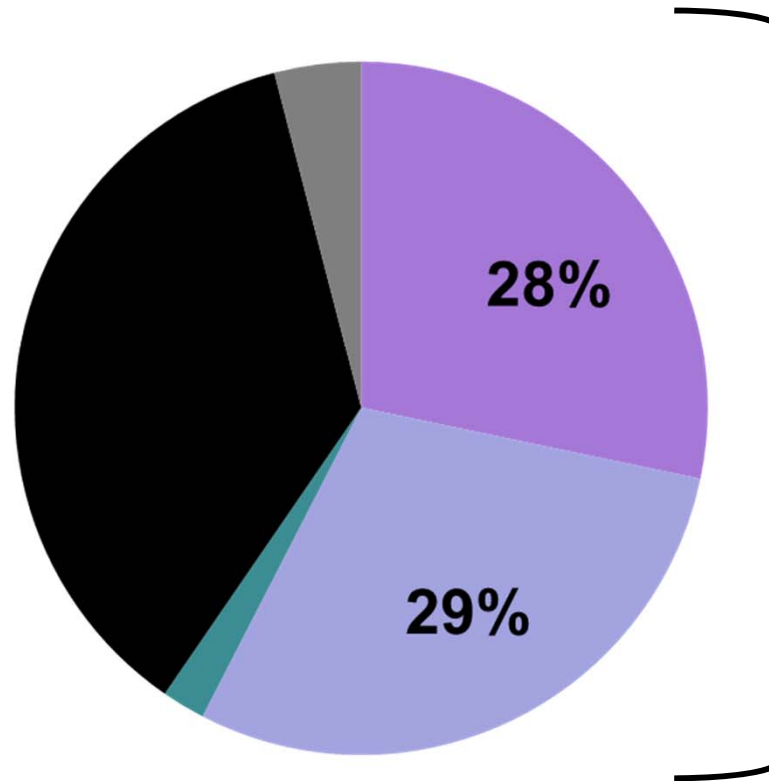
	Very Often	Often	Occ.	Rarely	Never
Interpreting the POLST to make treatment decisions	0	0	4 (20%)	12 (60%)	44 (20%)
Following the orders contained in the POLST	0	1 (5%)	4 (20%)	9 (45%)	6 (30%)
Patient or family say that patient has a POLST form but it is not available	0	3 (15%)	10 (50%)	2 (10%)	5 (25%)
POLST form is incomplete or unsigned	1 (5%)	2 (10%)	44 (20%)	8 (40%)	4 (20%)

20 of the 33 LEMSAs provided responses to these items

LEMSA: Local Emergency Medical Services Agencies

What Do Nursing Home Residents Want?

- Do Not Attempt Resuscitation & Comfort Care
- Do Not Attempt Resuscitation & Limited treatment
- Do Not Attempt Resuscitation
- Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)
- Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) & Comfort/Limited



57% chose to limit care. If POLST information is not known these patients could receive care they don't want.

N=53,403

Source: 2011 Nursing Home Minimum Data Set
www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/lnc/pages/mds.aspx.

Case Study: What Can Happen When POLST Form Doesn't Travel with Patient

An 86-year-old woman with advanced dementia was transferred from a nursing home to a hospital because of a fever and weight loss.

The physician met with her daughter, and they decided that an extensive work-up and burdensome treatment would not be pursued.

The physician completed a POLST form electing comfort measures only – which was later signed by the daughter.

Case Study: What Can Happen When POLST Form Doesn't Travel with Patient

The hospital discharge information did not include the POLST form.

Two months later, the patient developed another fever and her blood pressure drops. Nursing home staff notify the on-call doctor who advises them to call 911.

Paramedics transport her to the nearest hospital and she goes to the ICU, is placed on a ventilator, and dies there.

Summary

- POLST is widely used in California nursing homes and hospitals
- Nursing homes and hospitals report problems with the flow of POLST forms between settings
- Emergency Medical Services report problems with the availability of documents
- A POLST registry would alleviate these issues and improve continuity of care