



EMS Special Memorandum - #09-001

Date: March 31, 2009

To: Mendocino/Napa/Sonoma County Law Enforcement Agencies
Mendocino/Napa/Sonoma County EMS Providers
Mendocino/Napa/Sonoma County Hospitals
Mendocino/Napa/Sonoma County Fire Agencies

From: Bryan Cleaver
Regional EMS Administrator

Mark Luoto, MD
Regional EMS Medical Director

Re: Recognition of Physician Order for Life Sustaining Treatment (POLST) Form

This EMS Special Memorandum confirms the validity of the California State EMS Authority form EMSA #111B within the Coastal Valleys EMS Region as an official CVEMSA guideline for end-of-life care. The POLST form is an addition to the list of approved forms; all currently acceptable forms remain valid as well.

Policy 4010 clarification:

The current Do Not Resuscitate policy states:

"EMS personnel will at times encounter patients who clearly should not receive maximal resuscitation yet who do not have all of the necessary documentation for limiting resuscitation. In such situations the paramedic will make base station contact and communicate necessary patient medical information. The base station will issue appropriate orders which may include the limitation or termination of resuscitation."

In addition to serving as a traditional DNR, the POLST form provides guidance to the paramedics and Base Hospital physicians in making decisions appropriate for those patients in such situations.

On-Scene Management: If EMS personnel are unsure about the appropriate level of intervention the Base Hospital Physician shall be consulted.

- If the patient is in cardiac arrest and a valid POLST form is present and indicates in Section A no resuscitation is desired, existing policy for the determination of death in the prehospital setting applies.
- If the patient is not in cardiac arrest and has a valid POLST form, EMS personnel may provide limited or comfort measures as described in section B of the form.
- The patient shall be transported to the hospital if comfort measures are started by EMS personnel, unless an alternate care plan is approved by the Base Hospital Physician.
- Any questions about transportation and/or destination of the patient will be directed to the Base Hospital Physician.
- It is vital for the continuity of appropriate care the POLST form accompany the patient to the receiving facility.

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