

End-of-Life Care

History

- Terminal illness
- Hospice care
- POLST or DNR

Signs and Symptoms

- AMS
- Congestion
- Change in breathing
- Change in pulse
- Fever

Differential

- Natural end of life
- Medication OD

E	If needed, provide immediate supportive care <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oxygen • Open and maintain the airway using non-invasive means only (e.g., chin lift or jaw thrust) • Suction as necessary • Position for comfort • Control external hemorrhaging • Immobilize obvious fractures using techniques to minimize pain
	Review POLST, DNR, or Final Attestation form (if present). Honor wishes listed on legal form
	Honor and respect patient/family wishes for transport after discussion

EMS may be summoned by family for a patient who has taken a lethal dose of medication under the California End of Life Option Act.

Respect the patient's wishes, but if family objects and requests intervention or transport, initiate comfort care.

Is the patient on hospice?

Yes →

If family member with decision-making authority is not present, ask for the phone number for their Hospice Nurse if not already on scene
Contact Hospice Nurse
Let Hospice Nurse discuss options with family, even if only over the phone
The family and Hospice Nurse should decide on an appropriate course of treatment or decision to transport
Transport to appropriate receiving center or requested facility of choice

No ↓

P	Administration of Naloxone is not advised
	Determine level of pain and treat if indicated
	For pain consider, Fentanyl
	Monitor and reassess 5 minutes following administration
	If transport is declined, complete Refusal and thoroughly document encounter

Notify receiving facility.
Consider Base Hospital for medical direction



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HIPAA PERMITS DISCLOSURE OF POLST TO OTHER HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS AS NECESSARY

Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment (POLST)

First follow these orders, then contact **Physician/NP/PA**. A copy of the signed POLST form is a legally valid physician order. Any section not completed implies full treatment for that section. POLST complements an Advance Directive and is not intended to replace that document.

EMSA #111 B (Effective 1/1/2010)

Patient Last Name: _____ Date Form Prepared: _____
 Patient First Name: _____ Patient Date of Birth: _____
 Patient Middle Name: _____ Medical Record #: (optional) _____

A CARDIOPULMONARY RESUSCITATION (CPR): *If patient has no pulse and is not breathing. If patient is NOT in cardiopulmonary arrest, follow orders in Sections B and C.*

Check One
 Attempt Resuscitation/CPR (Selecting CPR in Section A requires selecting Full Treatment in Section B)
 Do Not Attempt Resuscitation/DNR (Allow Natural Death)

B MEDICAL INTERVENTIONS: *If patient is found with a pulse and/or is breathing.*

Check One
 Full Treatment – primary goal of prolonging life by all medically effective means.
 In addition to treatment described in Selective Treatment and Comfort-Focused Treatment, use intubation, advanced airway interventions, mechanical ventilation, and cardioversion as indicated.
 Trial Period of Full Treatment.
 Selective Treatment – goal of treating medical conditions while avoiding burdensome measures.
 In addition to treatment described in Comfort-Focused Treatment, use medical treatment, IV antibiotics, and IV fluids as indicated. Do not intubate. May use non-invasive positive airway pressure. Generally avoid intensive care.
 Request transfer to hospital only if comfort needs cannot be met in current location.
 Comfort-Focused Treatment – primary goal of maximizing comfort.
 Relieve pain and suffering with medication by any route as needed; use oxygen, suctioning, and manual treatment of airway obstruction. Do not use treatments listed in Full and Selective Treatment unless consistent with comfort goal. **Request transfer to hospital only** if comfort needs cannot be met in current location.

Additional Orders: _____

C ARTIFICIALLY ADMINISTERED NUTRITION: *Offer food by mouth if feasible and desired.*

Check One
 Long-term artificial nutrition, including feeding tubes. Additional Orders: _____
 Trial period of artificial nutrition, including feeding tubes. _____
 No artificial means of nutrition, including feeding tubes. _____

D INFORMATION AND SIGNATURES:

Discussed with: Patient (Patient Has Capacity) Legally Recognized Decisionmaker
 Advance Directive dated _____, available and reviewed → Health Care Agent if named in Advance Directive:
 Advance Directive not available Name: _____
 No Advance Directive Phone: _____

Signature of Physician / Nurse Practitioner / Physician Assistant (Physician/NP/PA)
 My signature below indicates to the best of my knowledge that these orders are consistent with the patient's medical condition and preferences.
 Print Physician/NP/PA Name: _____ Physician/NP/PA Phone #: _____ Physician/PA License #, NP Cert. #: _____
 Physician/NP/PA Signature: (required) _____ Date: _____

Signature of Patient or Legally Recognized Decisionmaker
 I am aware that this form is voluntary. By signing this form the legally recognized decisionmaker acknowledges that this request regarding resuscitative measures is consistent with the known desires of, and with the best interest of, the individual who is the subject of the form.
 Print Name: _____ Relationship: (write self if patient) _____
 Signature: (required) _____ Date: _____

Mailing Address (street/city/state/zip): _____ Phone Number: _____

FOR REGISTRY USE ONLY

SEND FORM WITH PATIENT WHENEVER TRANSFERRED OR DISCHARGED

*Form versions with effective dates of 1/1/2009, 4/1/2011 or 10/1/2014 are also valid

POLST forms are generally copied on pink paper to help ensure that the document stands out and is followed. However, POLST on any paper color is valid.

Unlike POLST, there is no standardized DNR order form. If you have doubt of a DNR order authenticity, initiate BLS care and contact the Base Hospital for guidance.



General Treatment Protocols

Pearls

- Contact the Base Hospital for direction or assistance with family in the absence of a Hospice Nurse if necessary.
- Patients who have been deemed terminally ill by two independent physicians have the right under the California End of Life Option Act to end their life with dignity at a time that they choose themselves. EMS personnel should be aware of and familiar with this act. Refer to Policy 507 – Determining Death for additional information.
- Naloxone will not have an affect on the drugs prescribed for death with dignity patients.
- Hospice patients and those on palliative end of life care are often heavily medicated with pain medications. Administration of Naloxone, even in small amounts, can result in unnecessary suffering.
- A Medic Alert Bracelet or Medallion stamped DNR is a valid DNR order.
- Follow the wishes outlined in a signed POLST or DNR order. A competent patient or designated decision maker acting on behalf of the patient can override POLST.
- If a POLST or DNR order is not immediately available, immediately initiate BLS supportive care. Do not delay care while waiting for the form.
- If transport is initiated at the request of the family and the patient subsequently goes into cardiac or respiratory arrest during transport, continue to the closest appropriate hospital.
- Always involve the patient's assigned Hospice Nurse, even if it is by phone. It is important to recognize that families may be educated on what to expect with a dying family member, but no amount of preparation can eliminate the stress and grief of watching a loved one die.

