

## QUICK FACTS

- ⇒ The WyoPOLST form is bright gold colored document, allowing it to be easily identifiable for patients and caregivers
- ⇒ The WyoPOLST form must be signed by a patients health care provider and the patient or his/her legal representative in order to be valid.
- ⇒ The WyoPOLST form can be revoked or changed at any time by the patient or his/her legal representative if there is new knowledge of a change in the patient's condition or medical wishes, if specifically allowed by the patient.
- ⇒ The WyoPOLST form can be completed for any qualified patient, regardless of age.
- ⇒ The WyoPOLST form is designed for patients with serious illness or frailty.

## MISSION of the WoyPOLST

To improve end-of-life care in Wyoming by honoring the health care wishes and goals of care to those who have life limiting illnesses.

## Where can I find a WyoPOLST form?

- ⇒ <http://www.health.wyo.gov/aging>
- ⇒ [www.wyomed.org/WyoPOLST](http://www.wyomed.org/WyoPOLST)



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# WyoPOLST

Provider Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment



## What is WyoPOLST?

WyoPOLST stands for Provider Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment. It is an actual medical order form signed by a provider and the patient or his/her representative. The WyoPOLST form is an effort to take a patient's wishes as expressed verbally or outlined in an advance care planning document and place them into an actionable medical order to be followed by healthcare providers throughout the state.

## What does a WyoPOLST form do?

A fully executed WyoPOLST form gives patients with serious illness or frailty the ability to state their own preferences for end-of-life medical care in the event they become unable to communicate. The WyoPOLST is transferrable across healthcare settings and enhances communication among all health care professionals with the patient at the center.

## Do all providers have to honor the patient's WyoPOLST form?

Providers are mandated by law to honor the orders stated in the patient's WyoPOLST form immediately, but the patient's provider is obliged to examine, assess, and review the orders any time the patient transfers to a new health care setting, as health status and goals of care may have changed. The provider may then issue new orders consistent with the most current information about the patient's health status, medical condition, treatment preferences, and goals of care.

## Is the WyoPOLST form a legal document?

Law was passed during the 2015 Wyoming Legislative Session implementing the WyoPOLST program, making the WyoPOLST form a legal document in the State of Wyoming.

## Who is the WyoPOLST form most appropriate for?

The WyoPOLST form is useful for patients who are seriously ill with a life expectancy less than one year or who are frail and elderly. The WyoPOLST form can be completed for a qualified patient regardless of age.

## Who initiates the conversation about a WyoPOLST form?

The diagnosis of a life-limiting condition can leave patients and their families with many questions. It is important for providers to discuss with them the facts about the illness, the kinds of treatment available, and what treatments will help, might help, and won't help. The WyoPOLST form provides a context for guiding this important conversation. The conversation can be initiated by either the patient, his/her family, or the patient's health care provider.

## Is the WyoPOLST form the same as an advance directive?

No. An advance directive, also known as a 'living will,' is a legal document that provides instructions specifying what types of treatment should be given to a person when that person becomes unable to make decisions or can no longer speak for him/herself. It is restrictive, as it only goes into effect if the patient loses the ability to make decisions and is terminally ill. An advance directive can be very specific or very vague, and is usually completed in advance of any known illness. The WyoPOLST document, however, is used as part of the health care planning process and is complementary with advance directives. It may also be used in the absence of an advance directive. In addition, the WyoPOLST document is a provider's order that specifically outlines a patient's medical treatment wishes and goals of care. As a provider's order, it must be honored by all health care professionals, and it can be used to translate an advance directive into a provider's order. Also, because the WyoPOLST document becomes part of the patient's medical record, it travels with the patient across health care settings.

