



## **Advance Directives Information Sheet**

Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment form, or POLST form is a list of medical orders, signed by your medical practitioner, stating what medical interventions you do, or do not, want for end of life care, if you are not able to speak for yourself. Usually you would ask your provider for this form when your death within the next six to twelve months would not be surprising.

Advanced Directives and Medical Power of Attorney statements are more general. If you have these, please bring in a copy and discuss it with your doctor or nurse practitioner. We need to know what you want, so we can order correctly for you.

Any and all medical care is done with your consent, and you have a "line-item veto" power. You would be responsible for the consequences, of course, if you don't follow medical advice. But care cannot be forced on you without your consent.

Advanced directives, medical power of attorney and POLST forms only take effect when we are not able to ask you. When we are able to ask you directly, we do. And you are entitled to change your mind at any time, regardless of what you have written in the past.

In the absence of any instructions, in a crisis, or when in doubt, we will do everything we can to protect your life. But "tubes" can always be removed, if they are not serving your wishes. And we would always act to keep you as comfortable as possible.

Regarding life-sustaining treatment, the crucial question is - Under what circumstances would your life no longer be meaningful to you? In other words, at what point would you want to be treated for comfort only, and not to prolong your life.

If you have named a Medical Power of Attorney, that person is supposed to authorize for you what you would have wanted if you were able to speak for yourself. Therefore, it is important that you tell that person directly what you would want. It would be helpful if you would tell your practitioner also, so we can comply with your wishes. If you have any further questions about these types of Advance Directives, please consult your physician or the front desk.