

# End-of-Life Care

**History**

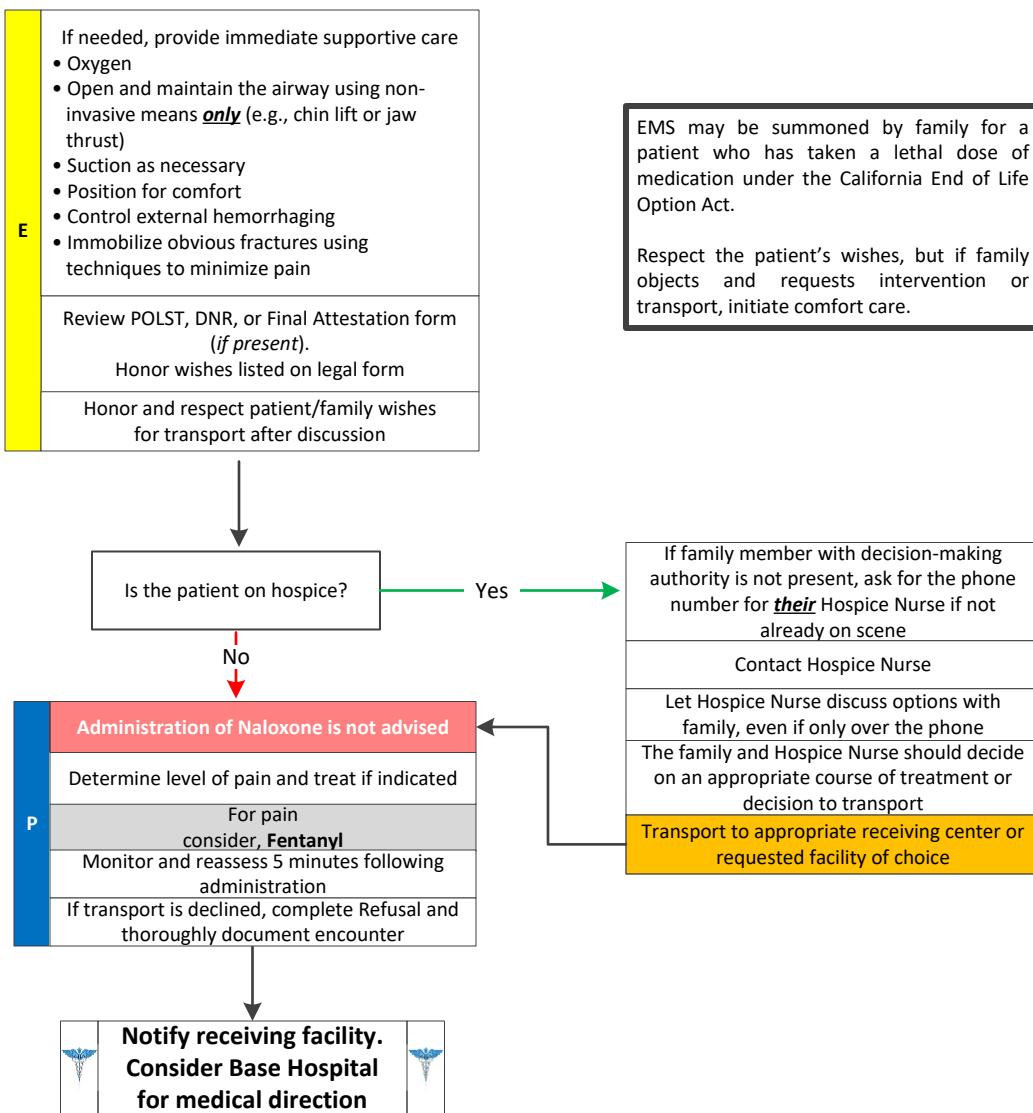
- Terminal illness
- Hospice care
- POLST or DNR

**Signs and Symptoms**

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

**Differential**

- Natural end of life
- Medication OD



# End-of-Life Care

<b>HIPAA PERMITS DISCLOSURE OF POLST TO OTHER HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS AS NECESSARY</b>	
 <b>Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment (POLST)</b> 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 Advance Directive and is not intended to replace that document. EMSA #111 B (Effective 1/1/2015)	
<b>A</b> Check One	<b>CARDIOPULMONARY RESUSCITATION (CPR):</b> If patient has no pulse and is not breathing, If patient is NOT in cardiopulmonary arrest, follow orders in Sections B and C. <input type="checkbox"/> Attempt Resuscitation/CPR (Selecting CPR in Section A requires selecting Full Treatment in Section B) <input type="checkbox"/> Do Not Attempt Resuscitation/DNR (Allow Natural Death)
<b>B</b> Check One	<b>MEDICAL INTERVENTIONS:</b> If patient is found with a pulse and/or is breathing. <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Full Treatment</b> – 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. <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Trial Period of Full Treatment.</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Selective Treatment</b> – 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. <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Request transfer to hospital only if comfort needs cannot be met in current location.</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Comfort-Focused Treatment</b> – 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. <b>Request transfer to hospital only if comfort needs cannot be met in current location.</b> Additional Orders:
<b>C</b> Check One	<b>ARTIFICIALLY ADMINISTERED NUTRITION:</b> Offer food by mouth if feasible and desired. <input type="checkbox"/> Long-term artificial nutrition, including feeding tubes. Additional Orders: <input type="checkbox"/> Trial period of artificial nutrition, including feeding tubes. <input type="checkbox"/> No artificial means of nutrition, including feeding tubes.
<b>D</b>	<b>INFORMATION AND SIGNATURES:</b> Discussed with: <input type="checkbox"/> Patient (Patient Has Capacity) <input type="checkbox"/> Legally Recognized Decisionmaker <input type="checkbox"/> Advance Directive dated _____, available and reviewed → Health Care Agent if named in Advance Directive: Name: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Advance Directive not available Name: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> No Advance Directive Phone: _____ <b>Signature of Physician / Nurse Practitioner / Physician Assistant (Physician/NP/PA)</b> 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: _____ <b>Signature of Patient or Legally Recognized Decisionmaker</b> 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: _____ <b>SEND FORM WITH PATIENT WHENEVER TRANSFERRED OR DISCHARGED</b> <small>*Form versions with effective dates of 1/1/2009, 4/1/2011 or 10/1/2014 are also valid</small>

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.



## 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.

