



What's a MOLST?

MOLST stands for medical orders for life-sustaining treatment. A MOLST is a form that lists the health care options available in a medical emergency and near the end of life. You check off the care options you want, then have your doctor, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant sign it.

A completed and signed MOLST form is a doctor's order, just like an order a doctor writes for you to have a medical test or treatment. It's a communication from one health care provider to all other health care providers to say that the care options that are checked off can be used and the options that are not checked off should not be used.

A MOLST will be honored in all settings — including your home, ambulance, emergency department, intensive care unit, nursing home, and doctor's office.

If you're a family caregiver, you can help the person you're caring for get a MOLST.

Talking through options with an emergency department doctor

Now you can discuss your wishes for end-of-life care with an emergency department doctor!

Dr. Sarah Todd works in the emergency department at Falmouth Hospital in Massachusetts. She can talk with you — compassionately and without rushing — to explain all of the care options available and what your quality of life may be like after each of the choices. (It's not like we see on TV.) Then you can fill out a MOLST together. This lets you make informed choices about options you do and don't want.

Control over your treatment

Having a MOLST gives you control of your health care in an emergency and near the end of your life. If you become unable to communicate your wishes, your MOLST will communicate them for you. You can change your mind or create a new MOLST at any time.

A gift to your family

The time to create a MOLST is before you need one. A MOLST is a gift to your family. In an emergency, they won't need to make care decisions for you. They'll know you're getting only the types of care you want. And that lets them stay focused on supporting you when you need them the most.

Sharing your MOLST

Once you complete your MOLST, share a copy with your doctors, hospital, health care proxy, attorney, and/or financial planner. Also share it with the family members or friends who will take care of you (your family caregivers) if you need help taking care of yourself.

Keep a copy on or near your refrigerator (emergency responders look there), in your purse or work bag, and in your car's glove compartment.

This allows everyone who may be involved in your care to know your wishes. It also enables your family caregiver (spouse, child, sibling, friend) to provide your MOLST to health care providers during an emergency or as the end of life nears.

A MOLST (sometimes called a POLST) is honored in many states, including Massachusetts, New York, Rhode Island, and Connecticut. Bring a copy when you travel out of state. Many providers in other states will honor your MOLST, and it will help providers in other locations understand your wishes.

When you don't have a MOLST

Creating a MOLST is the chance to have a say in the care you want at the end of life. Without a MOLST, the standard for care is to do everything possible to save the person's life. This includes care in any setting and care provided by first responders. If you want only certain types of care, you need a MOLST.

The final step

For your MOLST to be effective, it needs to be on file with your local hospital and primary care doctor's office. Dr. Todd can help you with this critical last step.

For a free consultation

For a free consultation with Dr. Sarah Todd, call her at 508-524-7543 or email her at dr.sarah.todd@caregivingpathways.com.

Visit www.caregivingpathways.com for information about making a complete end-of-life plan for someone you're caring for or for yourself. You can also learn about making a care plan for the family caregivers who are caring for others.

See more on LinkedIn: [@SarahToddMD](#) and Instagram: [@caregiving_pathways](#).