



POLST Policy Recommendation for Quality Measures

Recommendation:

Completion of a POLST form should not be counted as a quality measure.

Background/Justification:

Health system experts have long recognized that incentives profoundly affect the delivery of health care, causing both intended and unintended consequences.

Counting POLST forms rather than conversations as a quality measure even without a financial incentive appears to also have unintended consequences.

POLST is appropriate for patients with advanced illness or frailty. Counting POLST forms may increase the number of POLST forms completed in those who are “too healthy.” This is also associated with the rise in complaints about feeling pressured to complete POLST when an advance directive would be the more appropriate document.

As POLST forms are **voluntary**, POLST form completion should not be counted as a quality measure.

Adapted from Sabatino, C. (2018). POLST: Avoid the Seven Deadly Sins. *Bifocal Journal of the American Bar Association Commission on Law and Aging.*, 39(4): 60-63.