



# Massachusetts Medical Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment



Please feel free to publish the following in newsletters or other communication vehicles. It is intended to encourage lawyers to visit the MA MOLST website to learn more about Medical Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment.

## MOLST E-News Brief

### *Special Edition: Legal Focus*

June 2014

### Announcing Additional MOLST Legal Resources Now Available

Additional content designed for lawyers has been added to the MA MOLST website. There's a new one-page [Legal Guide to the Massachusetts MOLST](#) form. There are also new narrated Power Point slide presentations that provide a **MOLST Legal Overview**. The overview involves a short introduction and three segments that cover:

- MOLST Legal Basics
- The MOLST Form and Background
- MOLST and Surrogate Decision-Makers

The [Lawyer's Frequently Asked Questions](#) and a chart showing the [Differences between MOLST and a Health Care Proxy Form](#) continue to be available.

The link for the MOLST homepage is <http://molst-ma.org>. To get directly to legal resources, the link is <http://molst-ma.org/information-lawyers>.

### Announcing MOLST Transition to MA Department of Public Health

As of July 1, 2014, MOLST will be under the purview of the MA Department of Public Health as it continues to expand throughout the Commonwealth. Educational and training resources will remain accessible through the MOLST website. Any questions regarding MOLST on or after July 1, 2014 should be directed to the Health Care Safety and Quality Bureau within the MA DPH. Contact information will be posted on the MA MOLST website in the near future.



## Announcing MOLST in New Languages



MOLST is being translated into several additional languages: Arabic, Khmer, Haitian Creole, Russian, and Cape Verdean. These new translated materials will be posted on the MOLST website by June 30, 2014. [Chinese](#), [Spanish](#), [Vietnamese](#) and [Portuguese](#) translations are available on the MOLST website now.

The translated MOLST forms are to be used for educational purposes only, to ensure that people with limited English proficiency can understand the content of the MOLST form. Only the [English MOLST](#) form should be signed by the clinician and the patient, and travel with the patient when transitioning among settings of care.

In addition to the MOLST form, other materials that are being translated include the [MOLST Brochure for Patients and Families](#), and [Frequently Asked Questions for Patients and Families](#).

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## Basic Background about Medical Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment ("MOLST")

**The MOLST vision** is that persons with advanced illness will have their decisions regarding life-sustaining treatments known, communicated, and honored across all health care settings in Massachusetts.

### Key points to take from the MOLST vision are that

- MOLST is voluntary (no one can be required to sign a MOLST form); and
- MOLST is not for everyone. It is for a small, but growing portion of the population - people with current advanced illness.

Patients who have a *current* advanced illness are people whose doctors would not be surprised if they died within the next year. The patient or health care agent signing on behalf of the patient should have an understanding of the patient's current diagnosis and prognosis.

Who is suitable for MOLST medical orders is a *clinician determination*. It can be suitable for use by persons of any age (could be children) with an advanced illness. Using MOLST is a voluntary decision for patients with an advanced illness under a clinician's care.

**MOLST is** a standardized process and form that a clinician can sign to convert patient's preferences about life-sustaining treatments into *medical orders* to be honored across health care settings and in patients' homes. MOLST is becoming the standard way to document, communicate and honor life-sustaining treatment preferences of patient's with an advanced illness in Massachusetts. Following an initial demonstration phase in the Greater Worcester area, statewide expansion of MOLST began on April 1, 2012. As of early 2014, MOLST was being used statewide.

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## Reminder

Please remember that MOLST does not change or eliminate the role of an appointed health care agent. Please continue to encourage *all adults* age 18 or older to sign a health care proxy form to appoint their health care agent.



### [Health Care Proxy Form](#)

## Suggested Reading

You may find it helpful to read the 2010 report of the Massachusetts Expert Panel on End of Life Care, [Patient-Centered Care and Human Mortality](#).

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*The Massachusetts MOLST project is a collaboration of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, and Commonwealth Medicine at UMass Medical School.*

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Commonwealth Medicine | 333 South Street | Shrewsbury | MA | 01565