



# MASSACHUSETTS MOLST→POLST TRANSITION PROJECT UPDATE #2

## November 2023

*The Commonwealth is transitioning from the MOLST to the POLST. After over a decade of utilizing the MOLST Form, the Commonwealth would like to better align with the National POLST Program by transitioning to the POLST Form. This transition will allow Massachusetts to have a more consistent and reliable system for ensuring that patient wishes are respected, regardless of where they may receive treatment. The Executive Office of Elder Affairs (EOEA) is leading this transition for the Commonwealth.*



## POLST Clinical Test Phase Completed: Thank you to Cooley Dickinson and Fairview Hospitals!

In September 2023, EOEA ended its 12- week Test Phase with Cooley Dickinson and Fairview Hospitals and their outpatient practices, as well as local Skilled Nursing Facilities (SNFs) and EMS.

We are so appreciative of the dozens of providers and staff who took part in the Test Phase, conducting Serious Illness Conversations and completing the POLST Form with appropriate patients.

These communities will continue to use the POLST form until the ePOLST registry is launched (read more below).

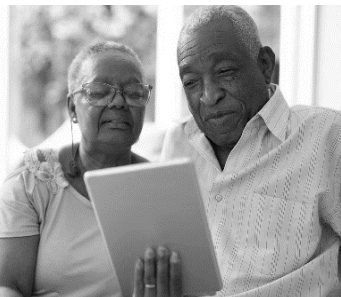
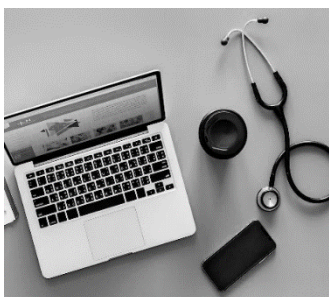
EOEA is completing a formal evaluation of the Test Phase and will share more in the coming months. The results of the evaluation will help EOEA develop a strong foundation for the ePOLST Registry.

|  <b>Mass General Brigham</b><br>Cooley Dickinson Hospital  |  <b>Fairview Hospital</b><br>BERKSHIRE HEALTH SYSTEMS   |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Paul Jodka, MD Cooley Dickinson Medical Group, Palliative Care</li><li>• Rebecca Starr, MD Cooley Dickinson Medical Group, Geriatrics</li><li>• CareOne Northampton</li><li>• Pioneer Valley EMS</li><li>• Northampton Fire</li><li>• Easthampton Fire</li><li>• Amherst Fire</li><li>• AMR</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• East Mountain Medical Associates PC</li><li>• Fairview Commons Nursing and Rehabilitation</li><li>• Southern Berkshire Volunteer Ambulance Squad</li></ul> |

## Vendor selection for the Massachusetts ePOLST Registry in Progress

After a competitive selection process, the Commonwealth is fast progressing to select a vendor who will develop a cloud-based electronic statewide POLST registry (ePOLST).

Once developed, the system will enable the end-to-end online completion, signing, validation, revision, and retrieval of the most recent POLST form for any given patient. The new ePOLST will be paperless: providers, patients, patient proxies and readers of the POLST form (such as EMS) will have access to dedicated portals.



It is anticipated that the registry will be available in 2025 statewide.

The Massachusetts ePOLST registry will offer dedicated provider, patient, patient family and EMS portals.

## Welcome to Priscilla M. Ross, RN: EOEA's new POLST Program Director

EOEA is thrilled to welcome our newest staff member, who brings a wealth of experience to the role. Priscilla is a registered nurse, with a career focused in homecare, hospice and transitions of care. As the Executive Director of VNA & Hospice of Cooley Dickinson, she was part of a team that provided education for the lay and medical communities around advance care planning, healthcare proxy and the MOLST. She served as the project lead for the POLST Clinical Test Phase in her role as Director of Care Coordination at Cooley Dickinson Hospital.

Priscilla notes, "I have witnessed firsthand the impact that having (or not having) clear, documented advance directives (including Health Care Proxy and MOLST) has on patients, families, and caregivers. I believe that patients who are aging or who have serious illness have a right to skilled, compassionate, honest discussions with their healthcare providers about what matters most to them, and what their wishes are for end of life."

Priscilla hails from Western Mass and is married with 3 adult children. She is the conductor of the Florence Community Band and enjoys knitting, cooking, caring for her menagerie of farm animals, and sitting by the fire in her log cabin in the woods.

Welcome, Priscilla! She can be reached at [priscilla.ross2@mass.gov](mailto:priscilla.ross2@mass.gov).

## Anticipated Plan for transitioning MOLST to ePOLST, 2023-2026

| Fall 2023   | Spring/Summer 2024  | Fall/Winter 2024  | 2025-2026   |
|---|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• State selects vendor for ePOLST Registry</li><li>• Evaluate and refine POLST Program elements tested in Clinical Test Phase</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop and test ePOLST Registry</li><li>• Begin distribution of educational materials for consumers and providers</li><li>• Release proposed ePOLST Regulations for public comment</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Publish final ePOLST Regulations</li><li>• Soft launch of ePOLST Registry</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Begin statewide implementation of the ePOLST Registry</li><li>• Sunset MOLST form</li></ul> |

## About the Massachusetts POLST Program

The mission of the Massachusetts POLST Program is to help people living with serious illnesses and advancing frailty engage in active planning with their clinicians and care teams to ensure that their treatment preferences are understood and honored, regardless of their point of care. Our goals are to:

- **Align with national standards and best practices.** Using the national POLST standard will enable improved portability outside of Massachusetts.
- **Establish POLST as an integral part of the advance care planning continuum in Massachusetts.** POLST is more than just a form. POLST is a clinical process that *results* in documenting patient preferences as a medical order that is honored regardless of the care setting.
- **Support effective care planning conversations for people with serious illness and advancing age.** We want to ensure that all clinical staff have appropriate tools for effective, compassionate, and thorough conversations with patients.
- **Ensure clear, reliable documentation about the program.** We want to ensure that all program components are well-documented and easily referenceable.
- **Improve integration across all care settings with an electronic registry.** The ePOLST system, accessible across care settings, will provide a single "source of truth" and will be available for integration into each organization's electronic patient records.
- **Continually improve the program.** Continuously improve the POLST Program and implement any new learnings.

## Questions?

For more information, visit the website: Visit: [mass.gov/polst](https://mass.gov/polst)  
Contact the Massachusetts POLST Call Center at 844-771-1629 or email: [POLSTSupport@uhealthsolutions.org](mailto:POLSTSupport@uhealthsolutions.org)

Sign-up [here](#) for quarterly updates on the transition