

ADVANCE DIRECTIVES AND POLST: Comparison chart

	Advance Directive	POLST
What is it?	Legal Document: names healthcare agent and states preferences for medical care	Medical Orders: based on shared decisions of person, or their agent, with HC professional
Who is it for? Who can complete?	Any adult: completed ONLY by the person with capacity. CANNOT be completed by a health care agent	Anyone/any age with a serious medical condition or frailty; can be completed by the person or healthcare agent with HC professional; signed by both
When/Where is it effective?	Guides in-hospital care after person is stabilized by EMS	Guides EMS in out-of-hospital emergency situations.
How is it verified? Notary?	Notary or 2 witnesses*	Hc Professional signature makes it a medical order
Valid/Can be acted on in emergency?	No, interpreted by medical team in hospital	YES, EMS/first responders can act on medical orders
Portability	Can be carried; may guide care if meets state law	Most states will recognize; likely to be honored by any EMS
Review	Individual/Family responsibility	More likely to be part of routine health care or reviewed with change of condition