

To learn more about  
**Medical Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment**

- ✦ Ask your doctor for more information
- ✦ Visit: [www.molst-ma.org](http://www.molst-ma.org)
- ✦ Call the MOLST program at (617)753-8066



“I know my children would like me to live as long as I can, but they don’t want me to suffer.” *Cancer patient*

“With the MOLST form, we can start the care the patient wants, hand the form over to the doctors at the hospital, and they can continue the care exactly the way the patient wanted it.” *Paramedic*

“There was never any question about the way my mother wanted things to be done.” *Son and caregiver*

Medical Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment is a Massachusetts initiative presented by the Department of Public Health, the Executive Office of Elder Affairs and UMass Medical School, Commonwealth Medicine.



**Massachusetts Medical Orders  
for Life-Sustaining Treatment**

*A way to make your own choices  
about your end of life medical care*



For persons of any age with a life-  
threatening medical condition,  
illness or injury

## What are Medical Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment?

**“Medical Orders”** is a health care term. It refers to *written instructions from a physician to other health care providers (nurses, emergency responders, etc.) about a patient’s medical care.*

**Medical Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment (MOLST)** is a written medical order that describes certain types of medical treatments a patient wants OR does not want to be given to try to keep them alive near the end of life.

## Who can use a MOLST form?

A MOLST form can be used by a person of any age who has a serious medical condition, illness or injury from which they may not recover. Using a MOLST form is *voluntary*.

## How is a MOLST different from a Health Care Proxy?

A **Health Care Proxy\*** is a *person* that everyone aged 18 and older is encouraged to appoint—to make health care decisions for them in the future *if they become unable to make or communicate those decisions for themselves.*

**MOLST** is a medical order with clear instructions about medical treatment for a person who is very sick. It is based on the person’s own preferences and is honored by all health care providers. It goes into use when it is signed.

\* Learn more about the Health Care Proxy at: [www.molst-ma.org](http://www.molst-ma.org)

## What is “Life-Sustaining Treatment”?

These are medical treatments that are used to try to re-start a person’s heart or breathing if they stop. One example of a life-sustaining treatment is CPR (see below).

### **MOLST forms contain orders to USE or NOT USE:**

#### **Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)**

Can include mouth-to-mouth breathing; forceful pressure or electric shock to the chest; intubation and ventilation.

#### **Intubation and Ventilation**

A tube is put down a person’s throat and attached to a machine that pumps air into and out of the person’s lungs.

Many health care providers are legally *required* to use CPR if a patient’s heart or breathing stops—*unless they have written orders with other instructions from a doctor.*

## What if someone with a MOLST form changes his or her mind about treatments?

A person can void the MOLST form at *any time* and ask their doctor to fill out a new MOLST form with their new treatment choices.

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