

The Indiana POST: Physician Orders for Scope of Treatment

Tips for Healthcare Professionals

The POST form is for qualified residents only.

In order to have a POST form, the resident must have an advanced chronic progressive disease, advanced chronic progressive frailty, a terminal condition, or are unlikely to benefit from cardiopulmonary resuscitation. A helpful question to consider is whether the medical provider would be surprised if the resident died within the next 12 months.

The POST is always voluntary.

A resident cannot be required to have a POST form.

The POST must be completed by a resident with decisional capacity or their legally appointed representative.

The representative must be legally appointed as a health care representative, power of attorney for health care, or court-appointed guardian. Family members who have not been legally appointed may not sign a POST on behalf of an incapacitated adult.

The form should be completed based on an in-depth conversation with the resident or their legal representative.

This conversation should include a discussion of values, treatment goals, and the risks and potential benefits of available treatment options. It is very helpful to include family members in the conversation so that they can understand the resident's decision.

The POST is valid only after it is signed by the resident or their legal representative AND the treating physician, advance practice nurse, or physician assistant.

The POST form may be prepared based on a conversation with the medical provider or designee of the treating medical provider. The physician, advance practice nurse, or physician assistant is responsible for reviewing the orders and determining if they are appropriate for the resident.

The POST form is the property of the resident.

The original, signed POST form should be given to the resident or his/her legal representative. At home, the POST should be kept in an easy to access place such as with the resident's medications. The resident should bring a copy of the form to medical appointments.

Photocopies and scanned versions of the POST are valid.

When a POST form is prepared, make multiple copies. One copy should be added to the resident's medical record. Additional copies may be given to family members and other medical providers involved in the resident's care.

The POST is a physician order.

Emergency medical personnel are required to follow the instructions regarding cardiopulmonary resuscitation and other medical care. Health care professionals are required to honor the POST in all settings.

A resident or legal representative can request alternative treatment or revoke the POST form at any time.

If possible, health care professionals should confirm that the POST form still reflects the current plan of care before acting.

A resident may decide to be "Do Not Attempt Resuscitation" in Section A but still request full intervention in Section B.

However, a resident who wants resuscitation attempted (Section A) must be Full Treatment in Section B in order to maximize the possibility that the resuscitation attempt is successful.

Comfort care usually means "No hospitalization" unless the resident cannot be comfortable in the current setting.

Comfort care is an active approach that emphasizes quality of life through symptom management. Some reasons a resident with comfort care orders may need to go to the hospital include uncontrolled symptoms such as pain, lacerations that require sutures, or a hip fracture.