



**County of Contra Costa  
EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES  
Memorandum**

**DATE:** December 20, 2017

**To:** Contra Costa County EMS System Stakeholders

**FROM:** Patricia Frost, EMS Director 

**SUBJECT:** Update on POLST eRegistry Pilot in Contra Costa County

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The **California POLST eRegistry Pilot** is underway in Contra Costa County and in the next few months will be ready to be tested by AMR 9-1-1 EMS ambulance personnel. The pilot was authorized by California [Senate Bill 19](#), and funded by the [California Health Care Foundation](#) with Contra Costa and San Diego Counties as the two pilot sites. The project is a joint effort of the [California Emergency Medical Services Authority](#) (EMSA), the [California Health Care Foundation](#), and the [Coalition for Compassionate Care of California](#) (CCCC).

POLST stands for Provider Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment. The form is a legal document typically used for people with advanced, progressive or terminal illnesses and specifies the type of care a person would like in an emergency medical situation. To learn more about EMS responsibilities associated with POLST see Contra Costa EMS County Policy # 1003 at <http://cchealth.org/ems/pdf/policy1003.pdf>

**Pilot Status Update: What You Need To Know...**

**Who is involved in the Contra Costa County Pilot?** The Alameda-Contra Costa Medical Association (ACCMA) is the project manager working with the Contra Costa EMS Agency, Contra Costa County Fire Protection District (CCFPD) and American Medical Response (AMR)-Contra Costa to pilot the POLST eRegistry. Vynca, Inc is the POLST eRegistry technology partner.

**Why is it important for EMS and Emergency Department personnel to have access to POLST information?** Having this information allows EMS professionals to deliver the level of care patients wish to receive in circumstances where the patient elects to limit medical treatments or procedures.

**How will EMS use this information?** EMS ambulance personnel will use the information in the same manner as if a hardcopy POLST form was presented on scene in compliance with Policy # 1003. The pilot is designed to test if the eRegistry helps prehospital personnel find a patient's POLST form.

**Who will be participating in the EMS field testing?** During the pilot period field testing will be limited to AMR ambulance field personnel (EMT and paramedic). Depending on the success of the pilot the project may expand countywide. During the pilot the POLST eRegistry lookup will also be available to all hospitals participating in the eRegistry project.

**How will field personnel access the POLST eRegistry?** AMR personnel will have access to the POLST eRegistry using the MEDS prehospital electronic health care record (EHR). The EHR integration has been designed by the project technology partner Vynca Inc.

**For the purposes of the POLST eRegistry Pilot...will EMS personnel be required to perform the look-up for every patient?** A standard operating procedure (SOP) will be created prior to the launch of the POLST eRegistry pilot. The SOP will describe when and for whom a POLST eRegistry lookup should be performed. After the SOP is developed training will begin.

**What information will be needed to perform a POLST eRegistry lookup?** Patient identification information such as name, address, date of birth and social security number may be used to query the POLST registry. A standard operating procedure associated with how to do the lookup will be part of training.

**When will POLST eRegistry EMS provider training begin?** Training materials for the pilot will be developed in partnership with AMR, Vynca and the EMS Agency. Training is expected to begin in early 2018 and will be accompanied with EMS Agency standard operating procedure and guidelines for utilization. Pilot workflows and protocols will need to be established prior to field training.

**Is there a way for the field to provide feedback on the pilot?** Yes, feedback from the field is vital to evaluating the technology and making sure the eRegistry works for both patients and providers. At various phases in the pilot implementation there will be data collected from the field users on the project. In addition EMS providers can report issues associated with patient care during the pilot using EMS event reporting at <http://cchealth.org/ems/event-reporting/>.

**I work for AMR and have seen the eRegistry search tab in the MEDS program. Does it work now?** The first phase of the eRegistry pilot requires hospitals, skilled nursing facilities and health professionals to upload POLST forms that can then be searched. Phase one is still in progress. During this phase MEDS switched over to the POLST eRegistry on December 5, 2017 for preliminary testing. That is why the tab shows up. However there are less than 200 forms in the eRegistry so the pilot has not started yet. If providers click the "POLST link" now they are "likely" not to find POLST forms. However Phase II of the pilot (EMS field implementation) will begin in early 2018 after Sutter Health and other facilities add a large number of forms to the POLST eRegistry. Training of AMR ambulance personnel will occur at that time.

**How are hospitals participating in the POLST pilot?** Hospitals, health care providers in clinics, skilled nursing facilities and other settings are responsible for populating the eRegistry (uploading the POLST forms). At the same time ACCMA is working with local hospitals to implement an eRegistry lookup capability as part of each hospital's electronic patient care record.

**So what is next?** The EMS Agency will provide updates as we get closer to testing the EMS field portion of the pilot. A date for the official launch will be determined and remember for the pilot only AMR personnel will be participating.

**Where can I learn more?** EMS System stakeholders are encouraged to use the POLST eRegistry Pilot Toolkit to learn more about the eRegistry Pilot at <http://capolst.org/registry-pilot/toolkit/>. The toolkit is still under development and is updated periodically.

Questions concerning this pilot should be referred to Patricia Frost, EMS Administrator at (925) 646-4690.