

## 2019 SOLOMON SCHOLARS RESEARCH PROGRAM ABSTRACT FORM

TITLE OF PAPER: POLST and Advance Directives: An often overlooked part of the medical admission process

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**Bench /Translational Research**\_\_\_**Clinical Research/HSR**\_\_\_**Case Study** \_\_\_ **QI/Med-Ed**

### ABSTRACT

#### **Background**

The Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment form (POLST) helps give patients more control over the medical treatment they receive. Only individuals with a serious illness or advanced frailty near the end of life should have a POLST. When these patients are hospitalized, the medical resident must recognize the need for a POLST. This opportunity provides patients a quick and simple way to make their wishes known. A POLST is different from an Advance Directive, which can be filled out by any adult patient at any time. The Advance Directive is also something that residents should be familiar with. This form should be looked for upon admission of a patient, as it will already state the patient's wishes.

#### **Methods**

Our QI project aims to identify housestaff knowledge about POLST and Advance Directive forms on a small scale in the Cedars-Sinai Medical Center Internal Medicine program with the goal of increasing knowledge. Our first PDSA cycle consists of surveying residents on how well they understand these forms. A two-page guide will then be given, followed by a survey. Using the results of cycle one, we will then initiate cycle two, which will consist of a lecture on the details and importance of each entity. This will again be followed by a survey. Our end goal for these two cycles will be to determine whether having formal lectures about these topics' influences housestaff knowledge about how to use these forms with the goal of increasing POLST and Advance Directive completion by our residency program. This could then be used as a paradigm for implementation throughout other departments at Cedars.

#### **Results**

36 residents responded to our initial survey. 86% of respondents felt comfortable with what an Advance Directive was, and 78% of respondents felt comfortable with going over an Advance Directive with patients. 89% felt comfortable with what a POLST was, and 73% of total respondents felt comfortable with going over the POLST with patients. However, only 58% felt that they understood the situations in which each would be appropriate to fill out.

#### **Conclusions**

POLST forms and Advance directives are important medico-legal forms that allow patients to specify their wishes for future medical treatment. Often, physicians are not always comfortable with the meaning or the situations in which each should be utilized. These physicians are frequently medical residents. While a majority of residents in the Cedars-Sinai Internal Medicine program felt comfortable with the meanings and situations in which to fill these forms out, a significant percentage did not. Going forward in our second PDSA cycle, we will give a talk about the details of each form and when to use them with the aim of increasing resident understanding and comfort with these forms.