



Massachusetts Allows Verbal Consent on a MOLST form during COVID-19 Pandemic

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For the duration of the COVID-19 State of Emergency, the state has suspended the standard requirement of a written signature on a MOLST form and allows for verbal consent, to be reliably honored by all EMS personnel and licensed practitioners in hospitals, long-term care facilities and across all health care settings.

This offers an important remedy for clinicians and patients where face-to-face MOLST conversations are not possible. Clinicians can now initiate proactive planning conversations **via telephone or virtual means** with high risk patients, their Health Care Agents and Guardians, to discuss goals of care and complete or revise a MOLST form using witnessed verbal consent.

The **Emergency Update to the EMS Protocol 7.3** provides the following requirements for documenting verbal consent on a MOLST form:

Where it is not possible impossible to follow usual MOLST standards requiring written signatures, clinicians are to document on the MOLST form:

- a) the patients, patient's health care agent's or guardian's verbal consent;
- b) who witnessed this verbal consent (in accordance with the standards of the health care facility in which the patient is located); and in addition,
- c) document in the patient's medical record the details of how verbal consent was obtained.

Upon reviewing such a MOLST form for a patient they encounter, EMS personnel are to accept a form that contains a) and b) in accordance with this procedure. As long as the witness portion is documented, EMS can accept it as meeting the standards of the health care facility.

All health care facilities can rely on their standard policies to suggest procedures for their staff in alignment with the new protocols.

The protocols are posted at [COVID-19 Guidance & Directives](#)

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