



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 11, 2016

**ON THE EVE OF NATIONAL HEALTHCARE DECISIONS DAY, APRIL 16,
N.J. GOALS OF CARE LAUNCHES VIDEO SERIES ON CHOOSING LIFE-SUSTAINING TREATMENTS**

NJ POLST form aligns a patient's personal goals with available therapies

PRINCETON, NJ —Doctor-patient communication is crucial to adults facing important medical decisions. The New Jersey POLST form, or Practitioner Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatments, provides clear instructions to medical practitioners, as well as non-medical caregivers, on how to proceed in a manner that follows the patient's wishes. To help patients better understand how POLST works, New Jersey Goals of Care recently added a series of videos to its online learning center.

Funded by Bridgeway Care and Rehabilitation Centers, Care Associates Network and the Health Care Association of New Jersey, the six-part series is available at <http://www.goalsofcare.org/njpolst-video-series/>.

The videos explain what patients need to consider as they make the decisions the POLST form requires, taking them step-by-step through the process of filling the form out with the doctor or nurse practitioner. Viewers will also learn the difference between a POLST form and a living will. The site includes a POLST request form to get the process started.

“The POLST form is a valuable tool that aligns a patient's personal goals with available therapies,” said Dr. David Barile, CEO and medical director of New Jersey Goals of Care. “With National Healthcare Decisions Day coming up on April 16, we think now is an appropriate time to invite the public to view our video series.” He noted that National Healthcare Decisions Day is a national initiative to encourage adults to plan ahead of a crisis to avoid difficult situations that can occur when a person becomes seriously ill and the family is left to guess what healthcare decisions the loved one would choose.

That's where the POLST form comes in. It can be used in any setting in New Jersey, from the hospital to the private home. A legally binding document, the POLST form is recommended for all patients entering into a final phase of life and for any adult who wishes to clearly state his or her preferences for end of life care.

Founded in 2009, NJGOC seeks to educate and support physicians, healthcare teams, patients and their families at all levels to ensure that a patient's treatment decisions stem from the patient's goals of care. To this end, NJGOC aspires to make it standard procedure to ask each

patient about his or her personal goals of care at the bedside and in the doctor's office, while enriching geriatric education to provide better prognostication and communication skills.

About New Jersey Goals of Care

Elder patients typically spend many weeks or months of their final years in hospitals. Seldom, however, do hospital providers have bedside discussions with them about their personal goals of care. New Jersey Goals of Care (NJGOC) was founded to address this problem, setting new standards for elder care and treatment. New Jersey ranks the highest in the nation for health care dollars spent on Medicare beneficiaries. Seniors in New Jersey can expect to see more doctors and undergo more tests during their final years of life than in any other state. While this high level of service may sound beneficial, the data show health outcomes for New Jerseyans are actually no better, and perhaps worse, when compared to other states. Unnecessary, burdensome care involving aggressive treatments or inadequate treatment is frequently out of sync with patients' wishes.

NJGOC's four-step framework of curriculum development moves the medical community from the two-step model of "diagnosis and treatment," which is the most prevalent working practice model of providers today, to the four-step innovative NJGOC model of "diagnosis, prognosis, goal of care exploration and then treatment." The focus is on helping to change the culture of physicians and other healthcare providers when communicating with patients around these critical junctures, as well as to empower patients and families to be better educated and prepared for these dialogues.

For further details about NJGOC, please visit www.goalsofcare.org.

Media contact

Becky Taylor, 609.240.6886, becky@btaylorpa.com.