

## Senate Resolution 386

By: Senators Orrock of the 36th, Unterman of the 45th and Butler of the 55th

## A RESOLUTION

1 Urging the Georgia Department of Human Resources to establish a uniform format among  
2 hospital forms used as Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment (POLST) and to  
3 mandate their use in all Georgia hospitals; and for other purposes.

4 WHEREAS, hospitals throughout Georgia vary the title and format of the paradigm designed  
5 to convey patient advance directives to health care professionals and to honor the treatment  
6 decisions made by the patient; and

7 WHEREAS, Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment (POLST) are endorsed in the  
8 federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) as critical medical  
9 documents used to disclose patient wishes to all health care providers upon a patient's  
10 admission to a medical facility and whenever a patient is transferred; and

11 WHEREAS, the POLST form enables physicians to document patient wishes as clear,  
12 specific medical orders regarding the types of life-sustaining treatment desired or refused by  
13 the individual with an advanced life-limiting illness; and

14 WHEREAS, Georgia needs to establish a uniform format for POLST forms and to mandate  
15 the use of POLST forms in all hospitals in the state to ensure that the patient and physician  
16 discuss and develop clear medical treatment plans that are based upon patient decisions and  
17 that respect patient wishes for a peaceful death with dignity.

18 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE that the members of this body  
19 urge the Georgia Department of Human Resources to establish a uniform template to be used  
20 by all hospitals licensed in the state as the Physicians Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment  
21 (POLST). All hospitals shall require their physicians to complete a POLST form upon the  
22 admission or transfer of a patient with an advanced life-limiting illness so as to document the  
23 patient's medical condition and treatment decisions and to ensure respect at the end of life.  
24 The department is authorized to consult the medical and clinician community and

1 representatives from hospitals and long-term care facilities in the development of the POLST  
2 form to be adopted and used throughout hospitals in Georgia. POLST forms shall be  
3 maintained as the first document in the medical record (in front of advance directives for  
4 final health care) to provide formal protocols to be followed by emergency medical  
5 technicians as well as by physicians and clinicians within hospitals and health care facilities.

6 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Senate is authorized and directed  
7 to transmit appropriate copies of this resolution to the commissioner of human resources and  
8 to the Georgia Hospital Association, the Medical Association of Georgia, and the Georgia  
9 Nurses Association.