

Senate Resolution 386

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

ADOPTED SENATE

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). The members of this body further urge all hospitals to establish a protocol for
22 physicians to complete a POLST form upon the admission or transfer of a patient with an
23 advanced life-limiting illness so as to document the patient's medical condition and treatment
24 decisions and to ensure respect at the end of life. The department is urged to consult the
25 medical and clinician community and representatives from hospitals and long-term care

1 facilities in the development of the POLST form for adoption and use throughout hospitals
2 in Georgia. The members of this body further urge that the POLST forms shall be maintained
3 as the first document in the medical record (in front of advance directives for final health
4 care) to provide formal protocols to be followed by emergency medical technicians as well
5 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.