

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.