



The Medical Society of the State of New York



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**State Medical Society and Health Insurer
Collaborate on initiative to improve End-of-Life Care**

The Medical Society of the State of New York (MSSNY) and Excellus BlueCross BlueShield today announced the launch of a joint community initiative to educate health and legal professionals about a new state-approved form designed to ensure that a patient's wishes for end-of-life care are carried out.

Called the Medical Order for Life-Sustaining Treatment, or MOLST, the form fully details a patient's wishes for resuscitation and life support machines and other treatment such as the use of antibiotics, intubation, nutrition and hydration.

MOLST is designed for patients who reside in a long-term care facility, those who want to avoid some or all life-sustaining treatments, or those whose health status indicates that they may die within the next year. The form is signed by a doctor and is designed to follow the patient through transfers to various facilities or levels of care.

Prior to the creation of this form, end-of-life preferences did not always follow patients as they made their way through the health care system as their physical state and ability to communicate declined.

“Our goal is to get the MOLST form as widely used by seriously ill patients as the more familiar Health Care Proxy and Living Will,” said MSSNY President Richard M. Peer, MD. “With all three documents in place, loved ones, care givers and advisors will fully understand a seriously ill patient's end-of-life wishes, even if that patient is transferred among various health care facilities or levels of care.”

The New York State Department of Health in 2005 approved the MOLST form; however it has yet to be widely used. MSSNY and Excellus BlueCross BlueShield believe that this is due to a lack of awareness or understanding of the state form, which can be addressed with education and training. With \$150,000 in private funds committed to the education project, the joint initiative launched by MSSNY and Excellus BlueCross BlueShield will include a training DVD and Web-based tools to help medical, health care and legal professionals identify appropriate candidates

for MOLST along with instruction on how to properly complete the form. Continuing medical education credit for providers who complete the training is also being investigated.

“It’s vital that we do all we can to help people ‘write their own final chapter’ while also providing loved ones, care givers and legal advisors with the documentation they need to accurately represent a patient’s wishes,” said Dr. Patricia Bomba, medical director of geriatrics for Excellus BlueCross BlueShield and a national expert on end-of-life care. “Surveys show that people aren’t dying in the setting of their choice because they don’t have advance directives in place.”

Additional information on the **MOLST** initiative is available on the Web at www.compassionandsupport.org

Additional information on **The Medical Society of the State of New York (MSSNY)** is available at www.mssny.org. MSSNY is an organization of approximately 25,000 licensed physicians, medical residents, and medical students in New York State. Members participate in both the state society and in their local county medical societies.

MSSNY is a nonprofit organization committed to representing the medical profession as a whole and advocating health related rights, responsibilities and issues. MSSNY strives to promote and maintain high standards in medical education and in the practice of medicine in an effort to ensure that quality medical care is available to the public.

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