

### **WHAT IS LaPOST?**

LaPOST stands for **Louisiana Physician Orders for Scope of Treatment**.

### **WHAT IS A LaPOST DOCUMENT?**

A LaPOST document is a physician's order that helps people with serious, advanced illnesses, regardless of age, to communicate their medical care preferences and goals of care.

### **SHOULD I HAVE A LaPOST DOCUMENT?**

If you have a known serious, advanced illness and are not expected to live more than six months, a LaPOST document provides a way to share your medical treatment goals with your doctors and health care team as well as with family members and caregivers. The document becomes a roadmap that lists the treatment options you may want, or not want, to have toward the end of your life.

### **IS THE LaPOST DOCUMENT A LEGAL DOCUMENT?**

The LaPOST document was approved by the Louisiana Legislature during the 2010 legislative session and revised during the 2016 legislative session. Louisiana law requires that the physician's orders in the document be followed by all health care professionals.

### **IS THE LaPOST DOCUMENT VOLUNTARY?**

The document is completely voluntary and is not biased for or against treatment. It is nonjudgmental and allows you to choose and clearly state your preferences for medical treatment when faced with a life-limiting and irreversible condition.

### **HOW DO I COMPLETE A LaPOST DOCUMENT?**

Completion of the LaPOST document begins with a conversation between you and your physician about your illness, treatment wishes, values and goals of care. Your health care team may also be involved to provide information about physical, psychosocial and spiritual matters. Together, they can help you make informed medical decisions that support your goals of care at the end of life. To be valid, the document must be signed by you (or your personal health care representative) and your physician. Once this is done, the LaPOST document becomes part of your medical record and must be honored by all health care professionals who are involved with your care.

### **CAN THE LaPOST DOCUMENT BE COMPLETED AND SIGNED ELECTRONICALLY BY THE PHYSICIAN AND THE RESIDENT/PERSONAL HEALTH CARE REPRESENTATIVE?**

Yes, the LaPOST document can be completed and signed electronically by the physician and the resident or their personal health care representative via the LaPOST Registry.

The LaPOST Registry is a secure, statewide electronic registry that provides a single source of LaPOST and advance care planning documentation instantly accessible online to authorized long-term and other health care professionals in any care setting. For more information regarding this registry, refer to the *LaPOST Registry Handbook for Long-Term Care Professionals*.

### **ARE FAXED AND/OR PHOTOCOPIES OF THE LaPOST DOCUMENT VALID?**

Photocopies and faxed copies of signed LaPOST documents are considered legal and valid, and they must include your most recent wishes. Bright gold-colored paper is preferred for easy identification if the document is photocopied. You are encouraged to keep the original LaPOST document with you and provide a copy of the document to your family and/or physician.

### **DOES THE LaPOST DOCUMENT TRAVEL WITH ME ACROSS HEALTH CARE SETTINGS?**

Because the document is designed to become part of your medical record, it transfers with you from one health care setting to another. If you transfer to a new setting, your original LaPOST document should accompany you, and a copy should be kept in your medical record.

## **DO PHYSICIANS HAVE TO HONOR MY LaPOST DOCUMENT?**

Physicians should honor the orders stated in your LaPOST document immediately, but your physician is obligated to examine, assess and review the orders any time you transfer to a new health care setting because your health status and goals of care may have changed. The physician may then issue new orders based on your current health status, medical condition, treatment preferences and goals of care. Any changes to your original LaPOST document must be noted in your medical record.

## **DO OTHER HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS HAVE TO HONOR MY LaPOST DOCUMENT?**

When completed, the LaPOST document must be honored by all health care professionals – physicians, nurses, emergency responders, etc. It serves as a road map for all members of the health care team providing medical care if you have a serious, advanced illness.

## **HOW DOES THE LaPOST DOCUMENT REFLECT MY CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS BELIEFS?**

Cultural and religious beliefs vary widely with regard to end-of-life care. There are many resources available at [la-post.org](http://la-post.org), including a special section to help you decide if the LaPOST document is right for you, based on your personal background. You are also encouraged to discuss the document with your clergy, religious or spiritual leaders.

## **DO I NEED AN ATTORNEY TO COMPLETE A LaPOST DOCUMENT?**

Because the LaPOST document is a medical order, only the physician and you, or your health care representative, are required to sign the document.

## **WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AN ADVANCE DIRECTIVE AND A LaPOST DOCUMENT?**

An advance directive, also known as a “living will,” is a legal document that allows you to provide instructions about the type of medical care you would like to receive when you are unable to make decisions or speak for yourself. It is restrictive, and only goes into effect if you lose the ability to make decisions and are terminally ill. An advance directive can be very specific or very vague and is usually completed in advance of any illness.

The LaPOST document is more than an advance directive. It is a physician's order that states your wishes for medical treatment and goals of care when you have a serious, advanced illness. It complements, but does not replace, an advance directive. It can also be used to translate an advance directive into a physician's order when you have a life-limiting and irreversible condition. Because it is a physician's order, it becomes part of your medical record and travels with you across health care settings.

## **WHAT IF THERE IS A CONFLICT BETWEEN AN ADVANCE DIRECTIVE AND THE LaPOST DOCUMENT?**

If your LaPOST document conflicts with your advance directive, or previously stated health care instructions, then to the extent of the conflict, the most recent statement of your wishes should be honored.

## **WHAT IS A HEALTH CARE POWER OF ATTORNEY?**

Like an advance directive, a health care power of attorney is a legal document. With it, you can designate someone you trust to make health care decisions for you when you are no longer able to make those decisions or speak for yourself.

## **CAN I REVOKE MY LaPOST DOCUMENT?**

You can revoke the LaPOST document at any time. If you can no longer make decisions for yourself, your health care representative may revoke the document if there is new knowledge of a change in your medical condition or wishes. To void a LaPOST document, your physician must draw a line through Sections A-C, write “void” in large letters and sign/date the document.



**LaPOST**  
[la-post.org](http://la-post.org)

### **WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION ABOUT LaPOST?**

For more information about LaPOST, or to download a copy of the document, visit [la-post.org](http://la-post.org).