

Restrictions on POLST Use Continue

It is now well-known that the bishops of Wisconsin have issued a pastoral letter that strongly discourages the use of POLST forms by Catholics and in Catholic hospitals. This letter, “Upholding the Dignity of Human Life,” may be accessed at www.minnesotacatholic.org.

Following suit, the bishops of Minnesota have just issued a similar letter in which, after underscoring the sacredness of human life, the Catholic principles for making decisions about end-of-life treatments, and the importance of advance care planning in the form of a Durable

Power of Attorney for Health Care, the bishops go on to outline their ethical concerns with the Minnesota POLST form and discourage its use. The entire document may be accessed at www.mncc.org/stewards-of-life/.

¹ Jennifer Mack, et al., “Associations between End-of-Life Discussion Characteristics and Care Received near Death: A Prospective Cohort Study,” *Journal of Clinical Oncology* (2012).

² Quoted from Genevra Pittman, “Early end-of-life talks tied to less aggressive care,” Reuters (Nov. 12, 2012). This summary relies considerably on her report.

³ Murray’s article was referenced in a more recent article. Also referenced was a subsequent article by Murray, “Doctors Really Do Die Differently,” that appeared July 23, 2012 in Zocalo Public Square.