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Staff education is necessary to successfully implement new practices in your facility. This section includes tips for planning staff education, and highlights educational resources that you may choose to use.

### To Do:

- Develop and carry out an LST Education Plan.
  - ? Which groups need training about the new progress note and orders?
  - ? Which groups need training about new policy requirements?
  - ? Which groups need goals of care conversations training to build their communication skills around issues of serious illness?
  - ? For each item above, how, when, and by whom will the training be delivered?
  - ? If your facility has residents who frequently rotate, how will you make sure they are educated about new processes?

**TIP:** Start with those who currently write or refer to DNR (or DNAR) orders in the patient's record. Because current practices for documenting a patient's code status will change when use of the new LST progress note and orders begins, it is imperative for inpatient and CLC/hospice staff to fully understand how to write and interpret these notes and orders.

**TIP:** Engage a small group of key stakeholders in each area of clinical specialty to think through the needs, learning styles, and teaching opportunities with their group. These key stakeholders may help to deliver training to their colleagues.

**TIP:** Self-guided education (e.g., a TMS module, videos, or PowerPoints by email) can help introduce new concepts to learners. Experience at the four LST demonstration sites indicates that it is not sufficient to ensure competence in writing (or following) LST orders or conducting goals of care conversations. Additional exposure to the material is required – through discussions in staff meetings, other presentations, skills training, and/or tools such as pocket cards and worksheets.

**TIP:** Consider whether the unions at your facility will want to weigh in on the education plan or timeline.

**TIP:** Add content about LST orders to CPR training and Code Drills.

**TIP:** Add LST education into regularly-scheduled mandatory skills training programs for nurses. Repeated face-to-face instruction with opportunity to ask questions through a regularly-scheduled educational venue has been found to be very helpful at LST Demonstration Sites.

**TIP:** Use of the LST progress note and orders can begin before all clinicians who care for patients with serious illness have completed Goals of Care Conversations skills training. Communication skills training can be rolled out in a planned, step-wise fashion as you work toward culture change associated with moving goals of care conversations upstream, earlier in the course of illness, in the outpatient setting whenever possible.

## LSTDI Education Resources, Listed By Topic

### The Life-Sustaining Treatment Decisions Initiative

- Video** - Featuring staff from VA LSTDI Demonstration Sites in Madison, Salt Lake City, Black Hills, and Lovell in North Chicago, this short video highlights new practices and how they enhance patient-centered care for patients with serious illness. (10:51) <http://bcove.me/ioq1pjb0>
- Online Module** – Provides an overview of the initiative, including new practices for conducting proactive goals of care conversations with high-risk patients and documenting those discussions in a new progress note template and order set. Addresses questions frequently asked by clinical staff about how new processes will impact their practice. NOTE: Offered through TMS, this program is accredited for physicians, APRNs, PAs, nurses, social workers, and psychologists. [https://www.tms.va.gov/learning/user/deeplink\\_redirect.jsp?linkId=ITEM\\_DETAILS&componentID=31722&componentTypeID=VA&revisionDate=1484850660000](https://www.tms.va.gov/learning/user/deeplink_redirect.jsp?linkId=ITEM_DETAILS&componentID=31722&componentTypeID=VA&revisionDate=1484850660000)
- Overview PowerPoint** – Provides basic information about the initiative. [www.ethics.va.gov/LST/Overview.pptx](http://www.ethics.va.gov/LST/Overview.pptx). For more complete information, see the online module above.

### Communication Skills Training

- For Physicians, Advance Practice Nurses, and Physician Assistants** – This face-to-face training program builds communication skills of practitioners who care for patients with serious illness. Includes training in delivering serious news, conducting goals of care conversations, and making shared decisions with patients and surrogates about life-sustaining treatment. To find trainers in your facility who

have attended a national train-the-trainer program, refer to this list.

<http://vaww.ethics.va.gov/goalsofcaretraining/trainers.pdf>.

- For Nurses, Social Workers, Psychologists, and Chaplains** – This face-to-face multidisciplinary training builds communication skills around discussing the patient’s goals, values, surrogate, and preferred treatments and services. Includes training in team-based strategies for routinely identifying high-risk patients and completing goals of care conversations. To find trainers in your facility who have attended a national train-the-trainer program (beginning April 2017), refer to this list of Goals of Care Trainers. <http://vaww.ethics.va.gov/goalsofcaretraining/trainers.pdf>.
- Sim LEARN Module** – Avatar-based communication skills training for practitioners who conduct goals of care conversations with patients with serious illness. NOTE: Use of this module requires downloading Unity Web Player software, which can be downloaded in just a few minutes with the help of IT staff. <https://myees.lrn.va.gov/SimLEARN/Gaming/SitePages/Goals%20of%20Care%20Conversation.aspx>. A preview of the module is available (0:41). [http://link.brightcove.com/services/player/bcpid4521574267001?bckey=AQ~~,AACmABW4\\_k~,u3UC4vmaozkRbnTOHzovpplgn0QYiIND&bctid=4915765583001](http://link.brightcove.com/services/player/bcpid4521574267001?bckey=AQ~~,AACmABW4_k~,u3UC4vmaozkRbnTOHzovpplgn0QYiIND&bctid=4915765583001)

### Differences Between LST Orders and Advance Directives

- Podcast** – Provides information for clinical staff about the ways in which Life-Sustaining Treatment Orders, which are completed by practitioners, are different than advance directives, which are completed by patients. Features staff at VA LSTDI Demonstration Sites. (08:37). <http://vaww.ethics.va.gov/ETHICS/LST/DifferencesBetweenLSTOrdersandADs.mp3>

### Identifying High-Risk Patients

- PowerPoint** – Reviews strategies for identifying high-risk patients who may be candidates for goals of care conversations, including a new tool available through a panel management software program for VA Primary Care Teams (Patient Care Assessment System (PCAS)]. This tool can be used to proactively identify high-risk patients, assign tasks to team members, and monitor completion of goals of care conversations in primary care. <http://www.ethics.va.gov/LST/IdentifyingHighRiskPatients.pptx>

## Goals of Care Conversations Webinars and Videos

- Introduction to Eliciting Values, Goals, and Preferences when Patients Have a Serious Illness** – Online presentation designed for social workers, nurses, psychologists, and chaplains who care for patients with serious illness. Addresses issues related to conducting goals of care conversations (GOCCs), including proactive identification high risk patients, the steps involved in conducting a GOCC, and documenting these conversations in the electronic health record. NOTE: This program is offered through TMS and is accredited for physicians, APRNs, PAs, nurses, social workers, and psychologists.  
[https://www.tms.va.gov/learning/user/deeplink\\_redirect.jsp?linkId=ITEM\\_DETAILS&componentID=31116&componentTypeID=VA&revisionDate=1478017260000](https://www.tms.va.gov/learning/user/deeplink_redirect.jsp?linkId=ITEM_DETAILS&componentID=31116&componentTypeID=VA&revisionDate=1478017260000)

The PowerPoint associated with this program is available for review without continuing education credit.

<http://www.ethics.va.gov/LST/IntroductionToElicitingValuesGoals.pdf>

- Team-Based Approaches to Eliciting Values, Goals, and Preferences when Patients Have a Serious Illness** – Online presentation that addresses steps health care teams should take to successfully implement goals of care conversations in their clinics. Features innovative team-based models used in Madison, Salt Lake City, and Brooklyn VA facilities. NOTE: This program is offered through TMS and is accredited for physicians, APRNs, PAs, nurses, social workers, and psychologists.  
[https://www.tms.va.gov/learning/user/deeplink\\_redirect.jsp?linkId=ITEM\\_DETAILS&componentID=31210&componentTypeID=VA&revisionDate=1479414240000](https://www.tms.va.gov/learning/user/deeplink_redirect.jsp?linkId=ITEM_DETAILS&componentID=31210&componentTypeID=VA&revisionDate=1479414240000).

The PowerPoint associated with this program is available for review without continuing education credit.

<http://www.ethics.va.gov/LST/TeamBasedApproachesToElicitingValuesGoals.pdf>

- Video: Conducting a Goals of Care Conversation with a Patient** – Video of a practitioner conducting a goals of care conversation with a patient who has a serious life-limiting illness. (20:20)  
<https://myees.lrn.va.gov/Watch/Video%20Center.aspx?vid=3936565795001#top>

## Goals of Care Conversations Tools

- Pocket Card for Physicians, APRNs, and PAs** – Outlines the steps for conducting a conversation with patients (or surrogates) about the patient's values, goals, and life-sustaining treatment decisions. Four pocket cards per 8.5" x 11" page; can be printed, laminated and then cut into individual pocket cards.  
<http://www.ethics.va.gov/LST/GoCCPocketCard.pdf>

- Worksheet for Physicians, APRNs, and PAs** – Outlines the steps for conducting a conversation with a patient (or surrogate) about the patient’s values, goals, and life-sustaining treatment decisions, and includes space for taking notes during the conversation. Two pages, 8.5” x 11”.  
<http://www.ethics.va.gov/LST/GoCCWorksheet.pdf>
- Pocket Card: Reviewing Life-Sustaining Treatments Orders (Including DNR) Prior to Procedures** – Outlines the steps for reviewing and changing existing life-sustaining treatment orders with patients (or surrogates) prior to procedures involving general anesthesia, initiation of hemodialysis, cardiac catheterization, electrophysiology studies or any procedure that poses a high risk of serious arrhythmia or cardiopulmonary arrest. Four pocket cards per 8.5” x 11” page; can be printed, laminated and then cut into individual pocket cards.  
<http://www.ethics.va.gov/LST/ReviewingLSTOrdersPocketCard.pdf>

### Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

- FAQs for Health Care Facilities Implementing the LSTDI**  
<http://vaww.ethics.va.gov/LST/FAQ/ImplementationFAQ.asp>
- FAQs for Clinical Staff Caring for High-Risk Patients**  
<http://vaww.ethics.va.gov/lst/faq/clinicalstafffaq.asp>
- FAQs for Clinical Application Coordinators/Health Informatics Specialists Installing LST Tools in CPRS**  
<http://vaww.ethics.va.gov/LST/CACHISResources.asp>



To stay on track,  
complete STEP 7  
by Nov. 1, 2017

## STEP 8: Launch New Practices

When staff members have been sufficiently trained, your facility is ready to implement your local LST policy and begin using the LST progress notes and orders.

### Prepare:

- Finalize the facility's LST MCM.
  
- Download or order copies of patient education materials.
  - *Setting Health Care Goals: A Guide for People with Health Problems*  
<http://vaww.ethics.va.gov/ETHICS/LST/SettingHealthCareGoals.pdf>
  - Information for Patients and Families about:
    - Feeding Tubes  
<http://www.ethics.va.gov/LST/FeedingTubeInformation.pdf>
    - Dialysis  
<http://www.ethics.va.gov/LST/DialysisInformation.pdf>
    - Mechanical Ventilation  
<http://www.ethics.va.gov/LST/MechanicalVentilationInformation.pdf>
    - CPR  
<http://www.ethics.va.gov/LST/CPRInformation.pdf>
  - A printed booklet containing the information above can be ordered by VA staff free of charge. To order, contact your Publication Control Officer (<https://vaww.vha.vaco.portal.va.gov/sites/VHACOS/10B4/PCO/Lists/Station%20POCs/AllItems.aspx>) and provide the following information:
    - ✓ Internal Bulletin number: IB-10-962
    - ✓ Publication number: P96845
    - ✓ Title: *Setting Health Care Goals: A Guide for Patients with Health Problems*
    - ✓ Number of copies you'd like to order
    - ✓ Your address
  
- A single document that incorporates *Setting Health Care Goals* and information about all of the LSTs listed above can be downloaded here:  
<http://www.ethics.va.gov/LST/SettingHealthCareGoalsandLSTInformation.pdf>.
  
- Consider attaching an informational template to the existing DNR/Code Status progress note title to remind clinicians to use the LST progress note to document

discussions about goals of care and code status. A Retired DNR Code Status Template has been developed and can be reviewed here:

[vaww.ethics.va.gov/LST/CACHISResources/RetiredDNRCodeStatus.pdf](http://vaww.ethics.va.gov/LST/CACHISResources/RetiredDNRCodeStatus.pdf).

A TXML file to make it easy for CAC/HIS staff to install this template is available here: [vaww.ethics.va.gov/LST/CACHISResources/OptionalDevelopment.asp](http://vaww.ethics.va.gov/LST/CACHISResources/OptionalDevelopment.asp).

- Schedule a date to start using the LST progress note and orders, and advertise it widely.

**TIP:** Plan to “turn on” the LST progress notes and orders at the same time in all clinical locations. Here’s why:

- Once you “turn on” the LST note and orders, don’t keep the old processes (notes and orders) in place. When given a choice between an old familiar process and a new process that initially takes extra effort to figure out, people usually choose the familiar process.
- Patient safety may be compromised if patients in the CLC, for example, have LST progress notes and orders that accompany the patient into the hospital, but inpatient staff do not yet use (or fully understand) them.

**TIP:** Staff may forget important information if you begin using the LST progress note template and orders more than a month after training has occurred – keep it fresh through the use of “count down” emails, tip sheets, and reminders in staff meetings.

- Establish a plan to support inpatient clinicians during the transition from the old process to the new.

**TIP:** Identify champions from each clinical area who can answer questions as staff get used to new practices.

**TIP:** Have someone available to answer questions from staff who care for patients overnight and on weekends. A well-trained chief resident may be an excellent resource for house officers who admit patients on a weekend and need help with DNR orders.

- Test the LST progress note and orders in the CPRS live account.

**Begin!**



To stay on track,  
complete STEP 8  
by Nov. 15, 2017.

## STEP 9. Monitor and Improve

Identify who will be responsible for monitoring implementation of LST practices at your facility. This might be your LST Advisory Board, or a subset of members. It might be your Preventive Ethics Team, or a work group established through Patient Safety or Quality Management. It also may be an activity that is pursued by each clinic or team with their own panel of patients.

### Through the implementation process:

- Keep facility leadership updated on progress and challenges. Work with them to set facility goals.

**TIP:** Remember, implementation may start slowly and spread unevenly. Maintain realistic expectations.

### Soon after launching the LST progress note and orders:

- Select a subset of record and check to make sure LST progress notes and orders are being written correctly. This can be done by members of the LST Advisory Board or by nurse or physician partners in each inpatient unit. Whenever problems are detected, reach out and offer help to the person who wrote the note or order.
- Assess for education gaps and address them.

**TIP:** Attend staff meetings, talk to Nurse Managers, call the Chief Resident – reach out and see how things are going, especially in the areas where DNR orders are routinely written.

**TIP:** Inpatient nursing staff can be an excellent source of assistance in identifying strengths and opportunities for improvement.

### Thereafter:

- Assess where goals of care conversations with high-risk patients are happening.

**TIP:** The LST Report, available to VA staff on the VSSC website, allows each facility to track Goals of Care Conversations (GOCC) that are documented using the LST progress note. Data can be stratified by fiscal year and quarter, by location (community living center, inpatient, outpatient), clinic stop code or treatment



specialty, provider, and patient. This report will aid VA facilities in identifying clinical locations within the health care system where goals of care conversations are – and aren't – happening.

[https://securereports2.vssc.med.va.gov/ReportServer/Pages/ReportViewer.aspx?%2fPC%2fGoalsOfCare%2fGOCC\\_MAIN&rs:Command=Render](https://securereports2.vssc.med.va.gov/ReportServer/Pages/ReportViewer.aspx?%2fPC%2fGoalsOfCare%2fGOCC_MAIN&rs:Command=Render)

More information about this report can be found in the LST Report Data Definitions.

<http://vaww.vssc.med.va.gov/VSSCEnhancedProductManagement/DisplayDocument.aspx?DocumentID=6689>

Access to patient-specific data in this report may be obtained at

<http://vaww.vhadatportal.med.va.gov/DataAccess/HealthcareOperations/RequestProcess>.

- Develop a plan to help target clinicians move Goals of Care Conversations upstream, into the outpatient setting whenever possible.

**TIP:** Offer to come to staff meetings to discuss new practices. Assess barriers and potential strengths.

**TIP:** Offer Goals of Care Conversations training. These discussions may not be happening because clinicians have never had any formal training in how to conduct these conversations with patients and families.

**TIP:** Explore collaborative partnerships. How can Primary Care and Pulmonology, for example, work together to ensure that goals of care conversations occur with patients who have advanced COPD?

**TIP:** Engage your facility's experts in quality improvement.

- Identify strong performers (providers, treating specialties or clinical settings) and learn from what they are doing.

**TIP:** Use the LST Report to identify early adopters, learn from them, and disseminate best practices.

- Review the Facility Report on a quarterly basis at LST Advisory Board meetings to assess progress and update implementation goals.

- Report progress to facility leadership.



To stay on track,  
work on STEP 9  
through at least  
July 1, 2018.

## Resources

The National Center for Ethics in Health Care has developed information and materials to answer most questions about the Life-Sustaining Treatment Decisions Initiative and support its implementation. If you have questions, please review the resources on our website, and if you don't find what you're looking for, bring your question to the monthly Implementation Support Teleconferences. If you have an urgent question, contact us at [vhaethics@va.gov](mailto:vhaethics@va.gov).

### Links to key resources:

- LSTDI overview  
<http://vaww.ethics.va.gov/LST.asp>
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)  
<http://vaww.ethics.va.gov/lst/faq.asp>
- VHA Handbook 1004.03, *Life-Sustaining Treatment (LST) Decisions: Eliciting, Documenting, and Honoring Patients' Values, Goals, and Preferences*  
[http://vaww.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub\\_ID=4308](http://vaww.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub_ID=4308)
- Medical Center Memorandum template for VHA Handbook 1004.03  
<http://vaww.ethics.va.gov/ETHICS/LST/ModelMCM.docx>
- Implementing New Practices: Resources for Health Care Facilities  
<http://vaww.ethics.va.gov/LST/ImplementationResources.asp>
- Resources for Clinical Staff Caring for High-Risk Patients  
<http://vaww.ethics.va.gov/LST/ClinicalStaffResources.asp>
- Resources for Clinical Application Coordinators/Health Informatics Specialists Installing CPRS Tools  
<http://vaww.ethics.va.gov/LST/CACHISResources.asp>
- Goals of Care Conversations Training Information  
<http://vaww.ethics.va.gov/goalsofcaretraining.asp>

**Implementation Support Teleconferences** are held on the second Thursday of each month. LSTDI Coordinators and Alternates will receive Outlook Calendar invitations to these meetings.