

# end OF *life* CONSENSUS COALITION

## Vol. 21, March 2011

The newsletter of the Washington End of Life Consensus Coalition (WEOLCC)

### **SAVE THE DATE!** **2011 WEOLCC ANNUAL MEETING**

Friday, November 11, 2011  
Location TBA

## **POLST form and program revisions for 2011**

*IMPORTANT NOTE: There is an error in the language on page 2 of the POLST form. The incorrect version has "Revised 12/2010" printed in the bottom left corner of page 1. If you have received, or downloaded, this version of the form, please destroy/recycle your copies. The newest—and corrected—version is marked "Revised 2/2011." Older versions are still valid.*

In late 2010, the Physician Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment (POLST) form was reviewed and revised by the Washington POLST task force, a sub-committee of the WEOLCC.

One change of particular significance is the relocation of Antibiotics and Artificially Administered Nutrition sections from the front of the form to a new section on the back titled Additional Patient Preferences. This revision and others can be reviewed on the Washington State Medical Association (WSMA) website, [www.wsma.org](http://www.wsma.org), (Patient Resources, Patient Brochures, POLST) or directly at [http://www.wsma.org/patient\\_resources/polst.cfm](http://www.wsma.org/patient_resources/polst.cfm). The form will continue to be published on bright green paper, and earlier versions of the form, first made available in Washington state in 2001, will continue to be honored.

In addition to the revised form, a new educational resource is now available for Spanish-speaking populations: the POLST patient brochure has been translated into Spanish, and is now available as a download on the WSMA POLST webpage that people can use to print their own.

The 2010 revisions were approved by the WSMA and the Washington State Department of Health (DOH), the program's co-sponsors. The revision process reflects a commitment by the WSMA and DOH to review and consider revisions to the POLST program every two years. The form was last updated in December of 2008.

If you have any questions about the POLST form and program, please contact Graham Short at (206) 956-3633 or [gfs@wsma.org](mailto:gfs@wsma.org).

## **2011 WSHPCO Advocacy Hill Day garners enthusiastic support**

The Washington State Hospice and Palliative Care Organization coordinated an advocacy day in Olympia on February 23 to educate State Senators and State Representatives on the importance and cost effectiveness of the Medicaid Hospice Benefit. Fifty-seven legislators were educated about hospice and the Medicaid Hospice Benefit, a record number according to Anne Koepsell, WSHPCO Executive Director.

There is still a need to educate your representatives about the Medicaid Hospice Benefit. Go to [www.wshpc.org](http://www.wshpc.org) for advocacy material as you contact your legislator

## **Snohomish Palliative Partnership receives grant funding**

*Contracts for respectful conversation training and improved community support for advance directives*  
The Snohomish Palliative Partnership, a community-wide task force to promote excellence in palliative and end-of-life care, has received an Innovations Grant of \$20,000 from the Providence Health and Services Washington-Montana Region.

A portion of the grant will be used to contract the services of Drs. Stu and Lu Farber for a training program for practitioners county-wide in "Respectful Conversations", designed by the Farbers to provide an experiential learning experience in having conversations with people about their goals for medical and other care in the face of life-threatening illness.

Grant monies will also be allocated to developing workshops for the public that will focus on helping people fill out their advance directives. The group is using the funding initially to make Five Wishes forms available to county residents free of charge.

### **Participation and Staying Informed**

Visit the coalition's Web home to find out more.  
[http://www.wsma.org/about\\_wsma/weolcc.cfm](http://www.wsma.org/about_wsma/weolcc.cfm)

## 2010 Annual Meeting wrap up

Over 70 new and returning members attended the 2010 WEOLCC annual meeting on Friday, November 12, at the Red Lion Hotel, SeaTac.

The meeting featured the keynote presentation, “*Caring for Our Elders and Caring for Ourselves: Invitation to a community dialogue*,” co-presented by steering committee members **Stu Farber, MD** (associate professor in the Department of Family Medicine at the UW School of Medicine), and **Bruce Smith, MD** (medical director, Hospice & Nursing Home Services at Group Health).

Also featured at the meeting was a 'State of the State' of end-of-life care in Washington that included presentations on legislative issues and the Living Will Registry by steering committee member and LWR task force Chair **Robb Miller** (executive director of Compassion & Choices of Washington), an update on hospice by steering committee Chair **Anne Koepsell** (executive director of Washington State Hospice and Palliative Care Organization), and a brief update on the POLST program by steering committee member and POLST task force co-chair **Sharmon Figenshaw**.

Meeting minutes and presentations are available at [www.wsma.org/about\\_wsma/weolcc.cfm](http://www.wsma.org/about_wsma/weolcc.cfm)

## Update on Steering Committee 2010 Retreat

The Coalition steering committee held its annual retreat on October 15 and 16, 2010, in sunny Yakima. At the retreat the committee:

- Reviewed and approved nominees for new WEOLCC leadership (see following item)
- Determined dates for 2011 quarterly steering committee meetings and WEOLCC annual meeting
- Reviewed and provided input into the work of the Living Will Registry task force (a sub-committee of the steering committee)
- Reviewed and provided input into the work of the POLST task force (a sub-committee of the steering committee), including reviewing the revisions being considered for the form
- Formed a new sub-committee to monitor the progress of pain management rule-making currently taking place in the Department of Health
- Reached consensus in supporting the current structure/status of the WEOLCC with a commitment to continue looking at potential restructuring at the 2011 Retreat.

Also at the retreat, the following long-range goals for the WEOLCC were re-affirmed:

- Recruiting new members to the steering committee
- Positioning the WEOLCC as an incubator/connector – bringing people together, providing resources
- Collaborating with other organizations dedicated to end-of-life care where/when appropriate.
- Continue advocating for POLST and the DOH online Living Will Registry

The next steering committee retreat will take place in Fall City, Wash. on March 25 & 26, 2011.

## New leadership at the Coalition

2010 saw a change in the leadership of the End of Life Coalition. Anne Koepsell is now the Chair of the WEOLCC, replacing Sharmon Figenshaw, RN, MN, ARNP, of Bellingham. Anne Koepsell is a registered nurse, but most of her work around end of life issues has been in an administrative/advocacy capacity. She was the Executive Director of Hospice of Spokane for 10 years, and is currently the Executive Director of the Washington State Hospice and Palliative Care Organization, based in Federal Way. She's been a member of the WEOLCC steering committee since 2005.

Linda Wrede-Seaman, MD, FAAHPM, FACEP, FAAFP of Yakima will replace Anne Koepsell as Vice-Chair. Dr. Wrede-Seaman is a pain and palliative care consultant with Yakima Physicians as well as a member of the Washington State Medical Association. She has been a member of the WEOLCC steering committee since its inception.

Many thanks to the inspired and committed leadership of Sharmon Figenshaw who will now serve as Chair-Emeritus.

Anne officially began her two-year term at the 2010 WEOLCC annual meeting last November.

## Steering committee welcomes new member

The WEOLCC would like to welcome Bruce Smith, MD to its steering committee. Dr. Smith is the medical director of Hospice & Nursing Home Services at Group Health in Seattle. Dr. Smith has 23 years of clinical practice in geriatrics & hospice as well as participation at local, state, and national levels of medical organizations focused on end-of-life care. He is also a member of the Washington State Medical Association

The WEOLCC is excited to have Dr. Smith as part of its leadership.