END OF LIFE CARE
A Physician’s Perspective

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- Pt’s with critical/life limiting illness
- Symptom management
- Quality of life
- Goals of care
Advance Directives/POLST

**Advance Directive**
- For anyone 18 and older
- Includes living wills, Do Not Resuscitate decisions, organ donation preferences and power of attorney forms

**POLST**
- For the seriously ill
- Includes directives for intubation, antibiotic use, feeding tubes and other treatments

*Instructions for future treatment*

*Medical orders for current treatment*
• Roadmap to patients care and beliefs
• ACP increased quality of life for the patient and family
• The presence of a Do-Not-Resuscitate (DNR) order was associated with a decreased use of cardiopulmonary resuscitation and an increased use of hospice and palliative care.
• Higher satisfaction for quality of care
Ambiguities in Advance Directives

- ? Permanent vegetative state
- ? Terminal illness
- ? Brain dead

- Only about 37% pts complete AD
Case

- 65 yr old female with liver cancer
- Progressive disease despite chemo
- No further treatment options

- Hospice
- POLST completed
Case Cont’d.

- Declined at home
- ED and then ICU
- Per husband, “I don’t want to die”
- Hospice revoked

- Mrs. SR was understanding of this and has been thinking time is limited. Readdressed code status today with regard to metastatic cancer and infection, and she confirmed she would not want any "heroic measures" as this would likely not change the outcome and communicated wishes consistent with DNR/DNI.
• Unable to discuss with pt, intubated
• Treated for an infection
• Couldn’t be weaned from the ventilator
• Ethics consult

• “Trach would be **futile**. Poor prognosis.”
Challenges with POLST

- POLST are appropriate for persons with serious illnesses or frailty where it would not be surprising if they died within a year.
- A POLST may be revoked by a patient or surrogate at any time and in any manner.
- The living will law allows for revocation “at any time and in any manner by the principal regardless of the mental or physical condition of the principal”
THANK YOU
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