

› The 4Step iCare Plan is an individualized, simple, 4-step approach to help you make difficult medical decisions.

In **Step 1** you will discuss your diagnosis with your doctor or other healthcare provider to gain a better understanding of your medical problems. In **Step 2** you will discuss your prognosis to learn more about how it is likely to affect your future. In **Step 3** you will think carefully about your personal goals and wishes. In **Step 4** you and your healthcare provider will use this information to make the medical and personal choices that are best for you.

The goal is to make sure that you receive the care you need and no less, and the care you want and no more.



Step 1: Understand Diagnosis

Ask your healthcare provider:

- › What is my diagnosis? (What is my illness or condition?)
- › Are there other medical problems I need to consider?
- › Do you have additional information on my condition?

NOTES: _____

WHEN TO HAVE THIS DISCUSSION

Conversations about advance care planning can be challenging, and the timing may never seem right. If you've been admitted to the hospital, received a diagnosis of a serious illness, or experienced a troubling change in your quality of life, it's a good time to have this conversation with your healthcare providers and your family caregivers. There is seldom a good reason to delay this discussion.

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Step 4: Align Treatment

Ask your healthcare provider:

- › What are the treatment options given my prognosis and goals of care?
- › What are the benefits and risks of these options?
- › What other treatments are there or which doctors I should consult?
- › What treatments or medications are no longer necessary?
- › Under what circumstances would returning to the hospital be necessary?
- › To what extent would beginning or continuing artificial nutrition (feeding tube) and hydration (IV fluids) align with my goals?
- › What are my chances of surviving cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and how would emergency procedures like that help me achieve my goals of care?
- › Is a POLST* form appropriate for me at this time?

NOTES: _____

THINGS TO CONSIDER

The aim is to ensure that, going forward, all medical decisions are based on your goals and wishes as defined in your iCare Plan. Before making treatment choices these are the kinds of questions you will need to discuss with your family and your doctor or healthcare provider.

* **POLST** stands for Portable Medical Orders. These are **medical orders** from a physician, physician assistant or advance practice nurse that addresses patient goals, scope of therapies, returning to the hospital, artificial nutrition, and resuscitation status.

The form is portable across all health care settings. **These orders are actionable and, by law, must be followed by the medical teams caring for the patient.**



Learn more by visiting polst.org/frequently-asked-questions-for-patients or goalsofcare.org/POLST. Although NJ is the example on the GOCCNJ website, the principles apply to any conversation and document that captures medical orders.