

Senior Services News

The Conversation Continues...

In a recent op-ed article in the New York Times, Jessica Nutik Zitter MD, a palliative and critical care specialist in Oakland, describes the case of an elderly man with advanced heart failure admitted through the emergency room to her intensive care unit. His heart was extremely weak, his blood pressure low, he was sedated, on a ventilator, and had just been stabilized with blood pressure-support drugs and intravenous monitoring tubes. Then his daughters called, having found out what hospital he had been taken to. They were on their way there, upset that his wishes not to have intensive care were not being honored!

It became clear that this patient previously had "The Conversation" with his loved ones about what type and intensity of care he wanted. He had gone the next step of filling out an Advance Health Care Directive, and naming an agent who will make his health care decisions when he is unable to. The Advance Health Care Directive describes in very general terms his desired approach to care near the end of life. However an Advance Health Care Directive is not precise enough in its verbiage to give specific directions to the health care team in an acute situation when resuscitative measures are needed. They

need to know NOW whether or not you want CPR, whether or not you want to be intubated or ventilated; and they need to know NOW who is speaking for you when you can't.

The trouble was, neither the

Advance Health Care Directive document nor close family were immediately available to the emergency physicians and doctors in the ICU. And in fact, the patient had never completed a Physician's Order for Life-Sustaining Treatment (POLST for short) document.

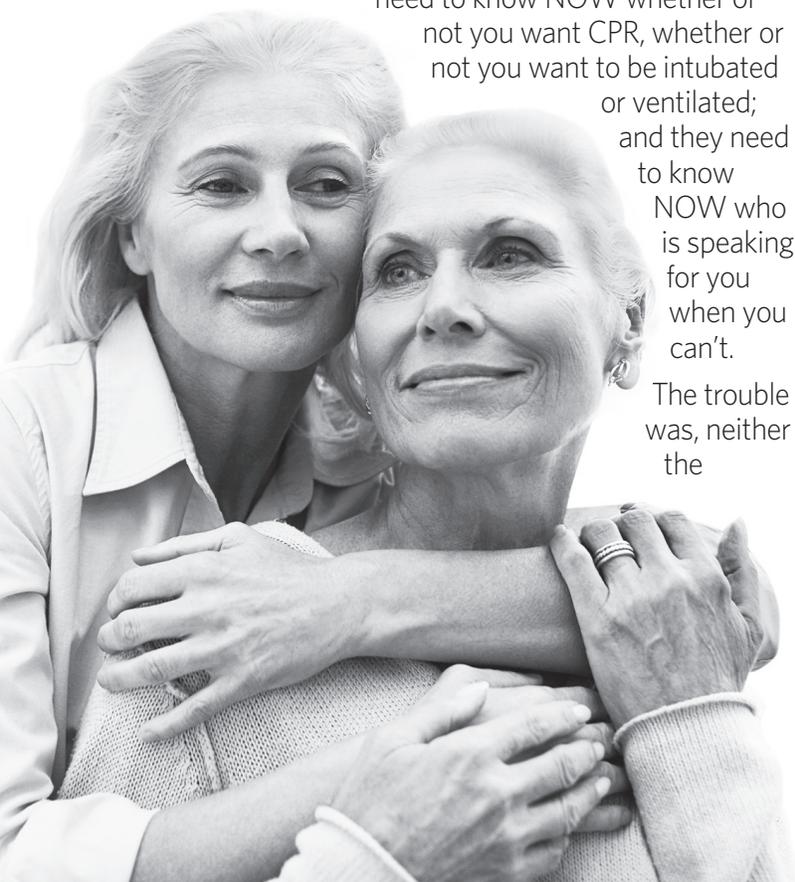
A POLST form is usually completed when someone is in an advanced stage of chronic illness with limited life expectancy. It contains specific directives regarding whether or not you want CPR, and whether you want all treatment options used ("Full Treatment"), medical treatment without going as far as the ICU ("Selective Treatment"), or treatment outside of hospital to keep you comfortable ("Comfort-Focused Treatment"). A final section deals with whether or not there are circumstances where you would want artificial nutrition through a feeding tube.

In the absence of any guiding information, the Emergency Medical Techs, the emergency room team, and the ICU doctors and nurses will feel obliged to do everything in their power to resuscitate you and prolong your life. Basically, if you say nothing, everything will be done! So if you are sure you DON'T want something done, you need to put it in writing, and that's what the POLST is for.

Once the Advance Health Care Directive and POLST documents have been completed, the final and crucial steps are to have the POLST signed by your physician, it then has the status of a doctor's order. Make several copies; keep one for yourself, give one to your Agent, one to your primary care physician and one to the hospital you usually go to. Perhaps all family members should have a copy as well. What about close friends? The choice is yours.

It seems like the reverse of "medical confidentiality" should apply when it comes to Advance Health Care Directives and a POLST document. It would be in your interest that as many people as practical should be familiar with their contents. Sign up for one of the Senior Service's Advance Health Care Directive classes (see page 3) and learn more about these important documents.

Lawren Hicks, M.D.
Medical Director, Senior Services



Educational Opportunities

There is no charge to attend our health education events unless otherwise noted. Registration is required. Register early, class size is limited. Register online at johnmuirhealth.com or call 941-7900 option 1.

JULY – SEPTEMBER 2015

Pain Management in the 21st Century - Kasra Amirdelfan, M.D.

July 9 | 9:30 – 11 a.m. | 941-7900 option 1 | John Muir Medical Center, Concord

Studies show narcotics are not as effective for pain relief. Learn what is new on the horizon for pain management. Two new techniques will be discussed that relieve pain for the neck, legs and lower back.

Understanding Options for In - Home Care - Sara Kelly, MSW, John Muir Home Health Services

July 21 | 6 - 7:30 p.m. | 941-7900 option 1 | Outpatient Center, Walnut Creek

A social worker from John Muir Home Health will discuss what to consider when hiring in-home care, the difference between skilled and custodial care and what is involved in working with home health.

Age Well / Drive Smart - California Highway Patrol, Cindy Lima

August 7 | 9:30 – 11 a.m. | 941-7900 option 1 | Outpatient Center, Tice Valley/Rossmoor

Learn information to help you tune up your driving skills and make a self-analysis of your driving abilities to help be a better, safer and more alert driver. This free interactive class will demonstrate safety devices applicable to most cars.

Exercise Methods to Prevent Falls - Lori Sweet, PT

August 21 | 9:30 – 11 a.m. | 941-7900 option 1 | Outpatient Center, Walnut Creek

As we age, our balance skills diminish. Health conditions can also impact our balance. In addition to providing exercises that will improve your balance, this class includes a safety discussion about improving safety at home, plus ideas about footwear and assistive devices. Exercises will be done in sitting and standing positions.

Managing Insomnia - Alan Brast, Ph.D., C.C.H.T., CSA

September 10 | 9:30 – 11 a.m. | 941-7900 option 1 | John Muir Medical Center, Concord

Discover ways to successfully conquer chronic insomnia and sleep deprivation. This class is designed for those who have trouble getting to sleep or sleeping through the night and do not have a medical sleep disorder.

Dementia - Should I Be Worried - Lawren Hicks, M.D.

September 15 | 2:30 - 4 p.m. | 941-7900 option 1 | Outpatient Center, Walnut Creek

Learn from a physician's perspective when to be concerned about your memory. We will discuss the differences between normal aging brain function and true memory loss as well as how to talk to your doctor or family about your concerns.

Ongoing Classes

Welcome to Medicare - Health Insurance Counseling & Advocacy Program

July 8, August 12, September 9 | 7 - 9:30 p.m. | 941-7900 option 1 | John Muir Medical Center, Walnut Creek

This course is for those new to Medicare, or soon to enroll, who want to understand the many benefits available. Learn about health benefits, drug coverage and how to supplement your coverage. HICAP does not sell or endorse insurance products. Register online at johnmuirhealth.com or call 941-7900 option 1.

AARP Driver Safety Program

Jul 7 | refresher class | 9:35 a.m. – 2:20 p.m. | John Muir Medical Center, Concord

Jul 11 | 1-day, 8 hour class | 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. | John Muir Medical Center, Walnut Creek

Jul 25 | 1-day, 8 hour class | 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. | John Muir Medical Center, Walnut Creek

Aug 22 | refresher class | 8:30 a.m. – 1:15 p.m. | John Muir Medical Center, Walnut Creek

Aug 25 & 27 | 2 - day, 8 hour class | 9 a.m.- 1:00 p.m. | John Muir Medical Center, Concord

Sep 17 | refresher class | 8:30 a.m. – 1:15 p.m. | John Muir Medical Center, Concord

Sep 19 | 1-day, 8 hour class | 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. | John Muir Medical Center, Walnut Creek

This Smart Driver classroom course, designed for motorists over age 50, helps drivers refine existing skills and develop safe, defensive driving techniques. Offered in an eight hour or four-and-a-half hour refresher course for those who meet the criteria for renewal. There is a charge for this class. Register online at johnmuirhealth.com or call 941-7900 option 1.

Advance Health Care Directives – Suzanne Leib, MFT

July 29 | 6 - 8 p.m. | 941-7900 option 1 | John Muir Medical Center, Concord

August 25 | 9:30 – 11:30 a.m. | 941-7900 option 1 | Outpatient Center, Walnut Creek

September 29 | 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. | 941-7900 option 1 | Outpatient Center, Brentwood

All adults, regardless of age, need to understand how they can have control over their own life and death decisions. Learn the choices you or your family may face due to an accident or serious illness. This is an opportunity to clarify your choices and make sure they will be carried out should you become unable to make your own health care decisions. Required documents will be provided.

Catch Yourself – Maintain Your Independence

July 6, 10, 13, 17 | 1:30 - 2:30 p.m. | 925-370-8770 | Martinez Senior Center

September 14, 18, 21, 25 | 11 a.m. - 12 p.m. | 941-7900 option 1 | Outpatient Center, Tice Valley/Rossmoor

This four-session class series raises awareness about falls by practicing techniques in class. Learn how to improve your strength and balance, simplify your environment, and identify fall risks. Classes will cover home safety strategies, exercise techniques, medication management, and other ways to decrease your risk of falling. Wear comfortable shoes and clothing. Plan to attend all four classes. If you have taken this class in the past 12 months, and feel you still need fall prevention information, we ask you to follow up with your primary care doctor or call Wellness Services 941-7900 option 1. There is a \$12 fee paid to the Martinez Senior Center.

Memory Screening - What's Your Memory Fitness?

July 14, August 18, September 15 | morning appointments | 947-3300

July 15, August 19, September 16 | afternoon appointments | 947-3300

Outpatient Center, Brentwood

Outpatient Center, Tice Valley/Rossmoor

Outpatient Center, Walnut Creek

Many people notice changes in their memory as they grow older. If you are 65 or older and have a John Muir Health primary care physician, Senior Services, in partnership with John Muir Health Neurosciences Institute, offers a free individual memory screening to help determine if your memory is functioning at a level that is typical for a person your age. This is a screening and not a diagnostic exam. Screenings are offered on the specific dates and times at the three locations listed. Call for a 30 minute appointment.



Senior Services
 1450 Treat Blvd
 Walnut Creek, CA 94597

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Change in information? If you have a change in address or wish to be removed from our mailing list, please notify us at 947-3300 or seniorservices@johnmuirhealth.com

John Muir Health Senior Services

Senior Services offers a wide range of services for John Muir Health seniors including resources, information, assessment services, and educational programs. We help older adults, their families, and those who care for them. Our goal is to help older adults keep their independence and enjoy the best possible quality of life. **(925) 947-3300**

Outpatient Center, Brentwood
 2400 Balfour Road, Suite 201
 Brentwood

Outpatient Center, Tice Valley/Rossmoor
 1220 Rossmoor Parkway, Suite 100
 Walnut Creek

Outpatient Center, Walnut Creek
 1450 Treat Boulevard, 2nd Floor
 Walnut Creek

September is Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month

John Muir Health Cancer Services

Ovarian cancer continues to have one of the highest mortality rates of any cancer and it is the 5th leading cause of cancer deaths among women in the United States.

The interdisciplinary team at John Muir Health recognizes that the treatment of cancer requires a unique approach for each person. Our physicians are regionally recognized and nationally renowned for their work in delivering the most effective treatments for cancer. For questions regarding our cancer services, please call (925) 947-3322.

Symptoms of Ovarian Cancer

ALL women are at risk for developing ovarian cancer. Existing symptoms can be vague and increase over time. Some of the symptoms include:

- Pelvic or abdominal pain or discomfort
- Pelvic or abdominal swelling or bloating
- Feeling full quickly
- Unexplained weight loss or weight gain
- Constipation and nausea
- Ongoing unusual fatigue

If symptoms persist for more than 2 weeks, consult your physician.

Program Locations

John Muir Health Wellness Services
 1656 N. California Blvd., Ste 100
 Walnut Creek
 (925) 941-7900 option 1

John Muir Health Outpatient Center,
 Tice Valley/Rossmoor
 1220 Rossmoor Pkwy., Walnut Creek
 (925) 939-1220

John Muir Medical Center, Concord
 2540 East St., Concord
 (925) 682-8200

John Muir Health Outpatient Center,
 Brentwood
 2400 Balfour Rd., Brentwood
 (925) 308-8100

John Muir Health Outpatient Center,
 Walnut Creek
 1450 Treat Blvd., Walnut Creek

John Muir Medical Center, Walnut Creek
 1601 Ygnacio Valley Rd., Walnut Creek
 (925) 939-3000