

Improving Health for All

In the April report from the Pew Center, there's a hint of a significant challenge for researchers and advocates as these technologies gain traction. Though the demographic data the study cites does not identify race and ethnicity, it does clearly show that those with lower socioeconomic status are less likely to have bridged the so-called "digital divide," a term used to describe the disparities in computer literacy and technology access in the US.

As these technologies will shape the health care environment to allow for—and rely on—patient engagement and self-efficacy through the use of various devices, careful attention will have to be given to ensuring we account for different starting-points, otherwise it seems likely that health inequities could worsen.

Carlos Crespo, DrPH, MS, is a researcher at Portland State University who works extensively in minority health issues. He urges attention to the social dynamics associated with health care experiences that differ among socioeconomic and ethnic groups, with regard to trust in the health care system and health care providers. He also noted that different groups will have varying abilities to make space for this kind of engagement in health on a very practical level. If people are struggling with worry over electricity, water, and rent, the chance that they will take a risk and work to adopt some new technology into daily life is smaller. Technology that would be integrated into a system and provided by Medicare or a CCO would have a better chance of successful impact.

More to Come, and Soon

New care models and processes are likely to involve some element of personal or environmental technology. Physicians and PAs can encourage patients to get involved in some of this research through OSU or OHSU. Both organizations have opportunities for volunteers to sign up on their web sites (see links at right). Whatever the future holds for this generation, it will be better connected. ■

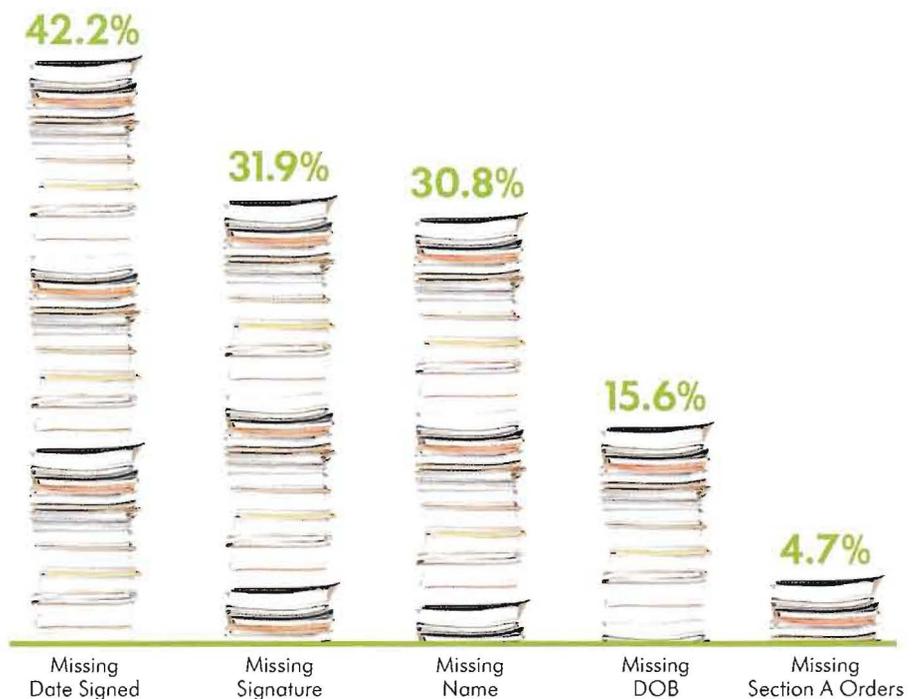
The Oregon POLST Registry *A Tool For Everyone*

Four years ago, the Oregon POLST Registry launched as a statewide electronic repository for Oregon POLST forms. Since then, the Registry has received approximately 200,000 POLST forms. The Registry helps ensure that your patient's POLST orders can be accessed when needed—by EMS, emergency departments, specialists, care facilities, and other medical professionals. There have been over 3,000 calls to the Registry and over 1000 successful matches of a POLST form to a patient in crisis.

The law creating the Registry does not require a patient to have a POLST form. However, when a physician, nurse practitioner or physician assistant completes a POLST form, the signing health care professional must submit the form to the Registry, unless the patient specifically opts out of the Registry. Submitting POLST forms to the Registry is easy, and can be carried out by the signer, or a member of the staff. Most POLST forms are submitted via fax to: (503) 418-2161. Unfortunately, the Registry cannot enter some forms because of submission problems.

Top NRR* Reason Frequency (Required Elements Only) 2013

Percentages do not equal 100, as a form can be NRR for one or more reasons



Based on NRR forms received in 2013, where a total of 7,612 forms were deemed NRR* (REO) for one or more reasons

*NRR stands for "Not Registry Ready" and indicates forms which cannot be entered into the Registry as received (e.g., the date signed is missing or the form is illegible).

There are items that **MUST** be completed prior to sending a POLST form into the Registry. You must sign and date the POLST form, and the form must include the patient's name and date of birth. The top two reasons the Registry is unable to enter a POLST form is because a signature or the date of signature is missing. ■

If you are treating a patient and need a copy of their POLST form, contact the Registry business office at (877) 367-7657, and they will fax you a copy of the form on file.

Do you need more information on the Registry, or POLST? Go to www.orpolstregistry.org or the POLST Program program (www.orpolst.org) to find resources for physicians, care teams, and patients, as well as the latest Registry data.