



Contact:

Deborah Fasser

518.689.7270

dfasser@corningplace.com

Dennis Tartaglia

732.545.1848

dtartaglia@tartagliacommunications.com

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New York's End-of-Life Planning Movement Draws Praise and International Interest

Visiting South Korean officials will study New York's existing protocols and innovative secure web-based application to advance their own end-of-life care initiative.

New York-based experts who have developed, implemented and raised community awareness of tools for end-of-life care today met with government officials from South Korea. Discussions centered on the state's [Medical Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment \(MOLST\)](#) initiative, which helps patients with advanced chronic illness and frailty maintain control of health care decisions regarding life-sustaining treatment.

Also receiving attention was the innovative web-based application, eMOLST, which assists healthcare professionals in documenting MOLST discussions electronically. Designed by Excellus BlueCross BlueShield, eMOLST is the only such system in the nation.

“MOLST aims to improve the quality of care that people receive at the end of their lives by documenting their preferences, values and beliefs through a shared informed decision-making communication process with their families and healthcare professionals,” said Patricia A. Bomba, M.D., FACP, vice president and medical director, geriatrics at Excellus BlueCross BlueShield. “Most people near the end of life lack the capacity to make their own decisions about the treatment they wish to receive and avoid. Most patients will receive post-acute and long term care from physicians who do not know them. By having completed MOLST forms, patients can be assured that the medical world will understand and listen to their wishes. And eMOLST takes this one step further by making sure the MOLST form is available electronically not only within patients’ medical records, but also across care settings and in the community.”

The South Korea parliament enacted the Act for Korean Life-Sustaining Treatment Plan, which is similar to MOLST, and Korean Advance Directives, which take effect in February 2018. Officials from South Korea are learning from New York and intend to develop regulations and a national implementation plan based on MOLST and eMOLST.

Clare Bradley, M.D., M.P.H., is chief medical officer of IPRO.

“We are very excited that IPRO's community-wide approach to advance care planning, with the critical support of Dr. Bomba, is being highlighted in this international forum,” Bradley said. “New York’s eMOLST and MOLST programs, which are already national models, are now international models for how healthcare professionals can help their patients receive high quality end-of-life care that is aligned with their values, beliefs and goals for care.”

James Clyne Jr. is president and CEO of LeadingAge New York.

“Through sensitive conversations about treatment options, values, and goals, and the creation of MOLST orders, our members have found that they can help their patients and residents to obtain the care they want at the end of life, whether it is aggressive treatment or comfort care only,” Clyne said.

Establishing a Statewide Registry

Additionally, Senator Rich Funke and Assembly Majority Leader Joe Morelle, have introduced measures (S.7883/A.10644) establishing a statewide registry for collecting, maintaining and ensuring availability of eMOLST forms. This registry will help ensure the most current electronic eMOLST forms is available in an emergency so end-of-life preferences will be followed as he or she moves through the health care system, facility to facility, physician to physician.

“By ensuring statewide access to eMOLST forms throughout the healthcare community we, can take an important step toward improving end-of-life care and ease the burden placed on patients and their loved ones at an otherwise difficult and emotional time,” Morelle said. “I thank Excellus BlueCross BlueShield and IPRO for their efforts to raise awareness and expand access to these valuable tools, and for their continued commitment to improving patient care and outcomes.”

“My careers in journalism and public service have reinforced the importance of clear communication and there’s no time when that’s more important than in end-of-life planning,” Funke said. “I am proud that our legislation would standardize a statewide registry for e-MOLST to ensure that a patient’s wishes are crystal clear and widely available, no matter who is providing care or where it is being provided. I thank Majority Leader Morelle for his partnership and Dr. Bomba for her leadership as we push to advance this common sense proposal.”

“New York’s eMOLST is easy to use, improves clinical and legal outcomes, and provides a community solution to ensure medical orders, and a copy of the doctor and patient discussion, are available in an emergency,” Bomba said. “Today’s meetings clearly establish New York as a leader in end-of-life care planning. I encourage state lawmakers to pass (S.7883/A.10644) establishing a statewide registry.”

IPRO is partnering with Dr. Bomba, vice president and medical director, geriatrics at Excellus BlueCross BlueShield on two Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) funded initiatives to help inform Medicare beneficiaries and healthcare professionals in New York about end-of-life advance care planning. The projects focus on New York State’s Medical Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment (MOLST) and eMOLST initiatives, which aim to improve the quality of care that people receive at the end of their lives by honoring their preferences, values and beliefs through a shared informed decision-making communication process with their families and healthcare professionals. IPRO leads the Atlantic Quality Innovation Network (AQIN), the Medicare-funded Quality Innovation Network-Quality Improvement Organization for New York, South Carolina and the District of Columbia.

For more information on eMOLST, please review the following video link: [eMOLST Overview](#)