



# COUNTY OF YOLO

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## Health Care Decisions Week

**(Woodland, CA)** – Today, the Yolo County Board of Supervisors recognized Health Care Decisions Week, October 27-November 1, 2008. Part of this recognition included a special thank you to California State Assemblywoman Lois Wolk for her legislative efforts to enact into law Assembly Bill 3000 (Physician Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment) which compliments advanced directives by taking an individual's wishes regarding life-sustaining treatment and turning those into a medical order. This new law, signed by the Governor on August 4, ensures that when a patient has a completed Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment (POLST) form, the form must be honored by all health care providers. A POLST form addresses a range of treatment options and enables a patient to clearly express their treatment preferences regarding life-sustaining treatments such as resuscitation, nutrition and pain management.

Also recognized by the Board of Supervisors and instrumental in these efforts were Dr. Jeffrey Yee and Joanne Hatchett, FNP, with Woodland Healthcare, who piloted a POLST program throughout Yolo County. The pilot program included hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, emergency medical services, hospice, home health, county conservators and physicians who participated in education sessions and discussion groups to incorporate POLST into the care of the frail, elderly and chronically ill.

“Introducing these issues in community settings can help people begin conversations about their health care decisions with a family member, close friend, doctor or faith leader,” said Yolo County Supervisor Helen Thomson who chairs the POLST task force of the California Coalition for Compassionate Care. “I am grateful for the efforts of Assemblywoman Wolk, Dr. Yee and Joanne Hatchett for further strengthening laws which support an individual's health care decisions.”

The California Coalition for Compassionate Care, with more than 60 member organizations dedicated to the advancement of palliative medicine and end-of-life care, identifies a week each fall to encourage Californians to make decisions about their medical care before serious illness or injury. Health care planning encompasses a wide variety of decisions, including how often to exercise, when to get check-ups and what foods you should to eat. While it may not be the most pleasant of topics, it is just as important to plan what type of medical care one would want if ever becoming seriously ill or incapacitated.

For more information visit: [www.finalchoices.org](http://www.finalchoices.org).

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