

Patricia Bomba, MD, MACP has been working on end-of-life issues from a population health perspective for well over two decades, earning local, state, national, and international recognition as a passionate advocate for the elderly and their families.

Dr. Bomba credits her drive to her mother. As a young girl, she helped her mom take care of several ill family members with patience, compassion, and humanism. Dr. Bomba uses many of those lessons she learned in her work today in assisting patients in their final stages of life. “My mom was a wise woman, and I listened to her”, Dr. Bomba says. “She taught me a lot about ethics and working hard. I learned how to speak with people and their families, as well as care for people and their families by watching what she did. She taught me the value of family, belief in God and community service.”

Inspired by her mother’s conversations about her own final wishes and personal stories from her patients and the community, Dr. Bomba developed the MOLST (Medical Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment) form and program, which honors patient requests as a critical element in providing quality end-of-life care in every health care setting. MOLST began as a project of the Community-wide End-of-life/Palliative Care Initiative founded in 2001 by Dr. Bomba. To initiate MOLST as a statewide program, Dr. Bomba started working with the NYS Department of Health in 2004. She sought legislation authorizing community use of the MOLST program by EMS and spearheaded a community-wide pilot study in Monroe and Onondaga counties from 2005-2008. Monroe County Medical Society, as well as other healthcare leaders across New York State, supported this study. MOLST became a New York statewide law in 2008 and today, virtually every state has adopted a similar form and program. In 2008, eMOLST was envisioned and the first prototype was developed in collaboration with local physicians, health systems and the Rochester RHIO. With passage of the Family Health Care Decisions Act in 2010 and added complexity of New York State Public Health Law, eMOLST was redesigned in 2011 and introduced as the electronic version of the paper form and process to ensure a standardized clinical protocol is followed and there are no medical errors in completion. eMOLST is being implemented across the state and continues to be enhanced with input from early adopters. This expansion would not have occurred if not for Dr. Bomba’s tireless efforts and dedication. Her input on the statewide adoption no doubt benefits countless numbers of patients’ quality of life.

Dr. Bomba spent 17 years in private practice in the Rochester community and has the reputation as a competent, kind and effective physician. She is one of the first physicians in our community to embrace geriatrics and her standing in the community helped to further the field. Additionally, she was one of the first physicians in the community to obtain the advanced certification in geriatrics when it became available.

Since taking on her role as Vice President and Medical Director of Geriatrics at Excellus BlueCross BlueShield in 2000, she has had a far-reaching impact on the care of patients beyond the Rochester community. Her work in developing best practices in end of life care led to the development of training courses and as well as two websites devoted to education, services and best practices, www.compassionandsupport.org and www.molst.org. Dr. Bomba has been influential on many other projects at the state level that have led to greater awareness of elder abuse and the needs of our rapidly aging population.

Dr. Bomba received her medical degree from the University of Virginia and completed her internal medicine residency at the University of Rochester. She is a diplomate of the American Board of Internal Medicine with added Qualifications in Geriatrics. She is also an Assistant Professor in Medicine at the University of Rochester School of Medicine and an Attending in Medicine at Rochester General Hospital. She was awarded Mastership by the American College of Physicians in 2016. Dr. Bomba has been extremely active in state, national and international committees as an advocate for MOLST and compassionate care of the elderly. These include the National Academy of Medicine, the Institute of Medicine, the American Board of Internal Medicine, the White House Conference on Aging and the Medical Society of the State of New York Ethics Committee. She has spoken over the years at local, state, national and international conferences advocating these issues.

She has received many awards and honors from her peers for her unwavering energy devoted to the elderly. She has been interviewed by National Public Radio, and has appeared on many other television and radio programs regarding pain management, palliative care and elder abuse in addition to publishing many articles in medical and law journals.

“My experiences in taking care of family members early on and guiding patients through their end of life journey as a physician, have helped me translate advance care planning to the population health perspective.” Dr. Bomba says. “What people at the end of life need today is the same thing they needed decades ago - a blend of professionalism and humanism, with honest conversations delivered with compassion.”