

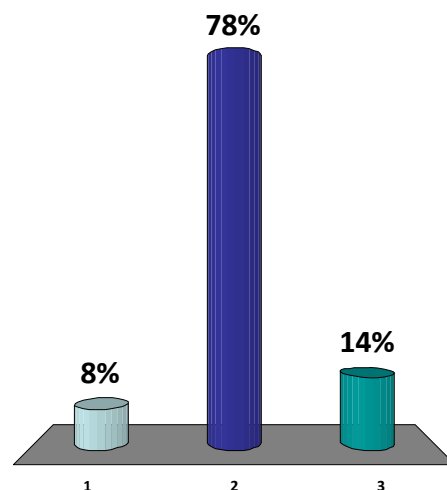
## Eleanor takes a fall

- Eleanor is an 87 year old widowed, retired nurse living at Golden Circle Assisted Living. Her daughter Samantha lives in Anandale and sees her about twice a month.
- Ellie's dementia has progressed gradually over the last seven years. So has her diastolic heart failure. It began with shortness of breath climbing stairs. Now Ellie no longer uses the stairs, but employs her walker in the assisted living.

- Samantha brought her mother to Anandale for Sunday dinner. Ellie seemed more tired than usual, so Sam had her take a nap and then drove her back to Golden Living . Sam got up at 5 the next morning and was on a plane for work by 8.
- At 8:30, Ellie fell. To the staff, she “just didn’t look right.” Her temperature was 98°. No one answered when the staff called Sam’s cell phone, nor when they tried her home.

## What should the AL staff do?

1. Ask Ellie if she wants to go to the hospital.
2. Look for an advance directive.
3. Send her in, since her proxy is not available.

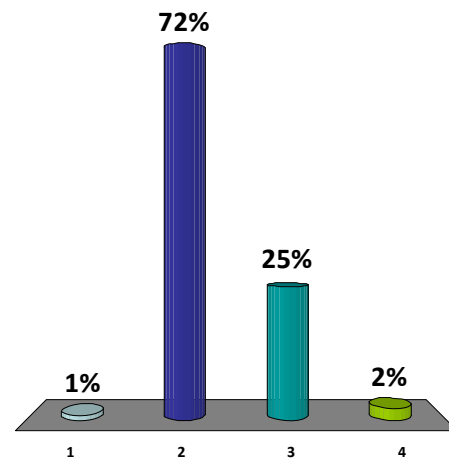


- Ellie arrives at Mercy Hospital ED. Her vitals are taken: 165/72 – 108 – 22 – 98.4° - 89%.
- Your overview page shows the following:



## What do you do next?

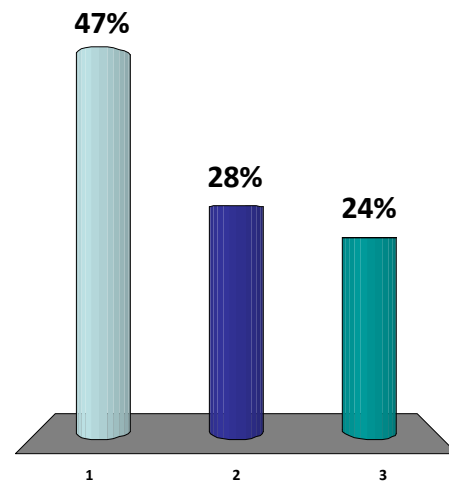
1. Nothing! The MD will see exact;u the same thing when she logs on. You're golden.
2. Read the POLST.
3. Read the Advance Directive
4. The Patient Self Determination Act requires you to ask the patient her wishes.



- Ellie's POLST indicates full measures of treatment. Her daughter Samantha is listed as her proxy.
- Your patient appears to be sick. She does not know she is. She responds to simple questions appropriately with a word or two.
- Ellie's advance directive also names Samantha as the proxy. In looking through the advance directive, you see that Ellie wants to limit interventions if she had a terminal illness.

## Does Ellie have a terminal illness?

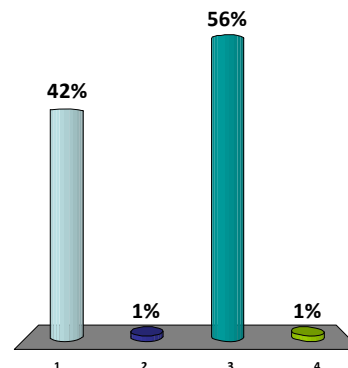
1. Yes
2. No
3. Other



- While the MD is tied up in a trauma case, Samantha calls the ED from a distant airport. You take the phone.
- ***“I just knew something wasn’t right. I shouldn’t have left town. What’s wrong with my mom?”***

## Which item(s) would you want to address at this time?

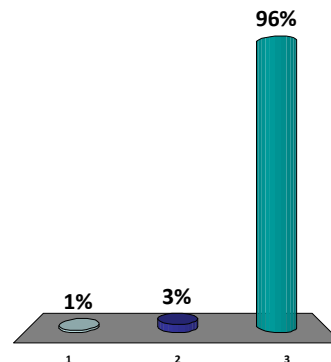
1. Give her your nursing assessment of Ellie’s condition.
2. Chastise her for abandoning her mother.
3. Ask her if she recalls the POLST or AD.
4. Ask her to reconsider Ellie’s Full Code status.



- ***“Yes, we did that living will a few years ago. Mom could still tell us what she wanted. Why are you asking? Is she dying? My God.”***

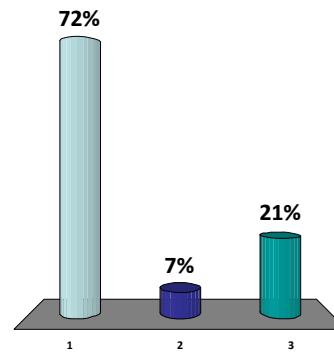
## How do you respond?

1. “Your mother is very sick, and she might not want CPR.”
2. “Your mother is sick, but Dr. Smith is about to see her, and she will call you after she does.”
3. “I’m asking because we want to make sure we honor your mother’s wishes for her care.”



## Sam is calmer now. What do you want to ask next?

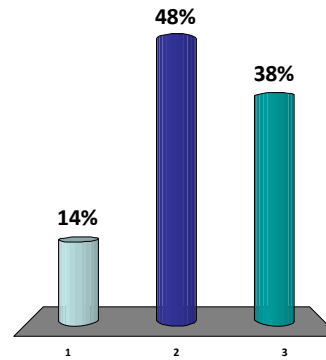
1. Has she read/does she recall the advance directive?
2. What does she know about her mother's dementia?
3. What does she know about her mother's heart failure?



- ***“Yes, I remember that discussion pretty well. Mom doesn’t always recognize me now. She thought I was her mother on Sunday. I thought her heart was doing okay.”***
- You assure Sam that her mother is comfortable and the doctor will give her a call in a little while.

## What should you do now in regards to Ellie's wishes?

1. Leave a Dear Doctor note for the MD to check the advance directive and POLST forms.
2. Talk with Dr. Smith before she sees the patient.
3. Document Sam's comments about Ellie's level of function.



The last admission