

LAC+USC MEDICAL CENTER POLICY

Subject: HEALTH/MEDICAL RECORD READABILITY	Original Issue Date: 11/13/07	Policy # 403.1
	Supersedes: 9/10/13	Effective Date: 1/10/17
Departments Consulted: Health Information Management Information Systems Medical Administration Nursing Services	Reviewed & Approved by: Attending Staff Association Executive Committee Senior Executive Council	Approved by: (Signature on File) Chief Medical Officer (Signature on File) Chief Executive Officer

PURPOSE

To assure the quality and readability of the documentation within the health/medical record and assist in protecting the legal interest of the patient, the LAC+USC Medical Center, and the responsible practitioner.

POLICY

All handwritten and/or printed entries made in a health/medical record shall be sufficiently readable to clearly communicate the intended information, enhance the quality and safety of patient care, and facilitate the continuity of care. These handwritten documents shall be legible and scanned into the Electronic Health Record (EHR). This policy applies to all healthcare professionals' documentation within the health/medical records created in and maintained by LAC+USC Medical Center component facilities.

DEFINITIONS

Unreadable or Illegible

Very difficult or impossible for two professionals to read the written or printed entry and discern the intended information/communication.

PROCEDURE

Orders

- If an order is unreadable, the healthcare professional being directed to complete the order will contact the responsible provider/practitioner to clarify the order prior to completing the order.
- If the responsible provider is unavailable, the healthcare professional seeking clarification will contact the next highest-level provider in the medical chain of command. (See Medical Center Policy 103, Medical Chain of Command)

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	Chief Executive Officer's Initials: (Initials on File)		

Other Health/Medical Record Entries

- If a practitioner/provider or other authorized healthcare professional is identified as being responsible for making two or more unreadable, written entries in the same health/medical record, that person's immediate supervisor will be notified.
- The immediate supervisor is responsible for initiating and documenting any necessary corrective actions.

Performance Improvement

- Readability of orders and health/medical record entries are assessed through analysis of data collected from medication orders submitted to pharmacy and concurrent health/medical record reviews.

RESPONSIBILITY

Attending Staff
Housestaff
Mid-Level Providers
Nursing Staff
Allied Health Professionals
Health Information Management

PROCEDURE DOCUMENTATION

Attending Staff Manual
Health Information Management Policy and Procedure Manual
Nursing Services and Education Policy Manual

REFERENCES

California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Sections 70749, 70223(f-h)
Joint Commission Standards (Management of Information)

REVISION DATES

November 13, 2007; October 9, 2008; September 10, 2013; January 10, 2017