



High Desert Health System POLICY AND PROCEDURE

POLICY NUMBER: 767
VERSION: 1

SUBJECT: PROHIBITED AND DANGEROUS ABBREVIATIONS

PURPOSE: To reduce the likelihood medication errors and to comply with the 2004 JCAHO National Patient Safety Goals, by restricting the use of prohibited abbreviations, symbols and dose designations in handwritten prescriptions, physician orders and elsewhere in the medical record.

POLICY: All healthcare professionals who are authorized to write prescriptions and/or medication orders shall refrain from using those abbreviations for medication names, symbols or dose designations that are included in the attached list of prohibited abbreviations, symbols and dose designations.

PROCEDURE:

All healthcare professionals who must interpret and execute the prescriptions and written orders will be expected to be cognizant of the possibility of misinterpretation of items on the attached list of prohibited abbreviations, symbols and dose designations.

Any healthcare professional responsible for carrying out a prescriber's orders, who encounters prohibited abbreviations symbols, dose designations or orders that are either ambiguous or a cause for concern or question, shall seek and document clarification of the order before the medication or other pharmaceutical is dispensed, distributed or administered to the patient. The staff member shall:

1. Contact the prescriber or replacement healthcare provider, verbalize concerns and seek clarification of the order. Documentation in writing of the clarified order shall be noted on the medical record.
2. Contact the relevant Chief of Service, if the staff member still has concerns regarding patient safety or the appropriateness of the order, after discussion with the prescriber or replacement.
3. Contact the Medical Director if the Chief of Service is not available or if the concern is not resolved after discussion with the Chief.
4. Contact the Chief Executive Officer, if the Medical Director is not available or if the concern is not resolved after discussion with the Medical Director.

At no time prior to the satisfactory clarification of the order, shall a healthcare professional dispense, distribute or administer any prescribed medication or other pharmaceutical that is the focus of concern.

Any healthcare professional responsible for carrying out a prescriber’s orders, who encounters prohibited abbreviations, symbols or dose designations or other orders that are either ambiguous or a cause for concern or question, will report the incident on the Multidisciplinary Medication Event Tracking Tool.

The healthcare professional will send the completed form to the Department of Pharmacy, attention “Chief Pharmacist.”

The healthcare professional will verbally notify their immediate supervisor.

A quarterly report of the incidents contained in the Multidisciplinary Medication Event Tracking Tool forms will be submitted to the Pharmacy and Therapeutic Committee by the Pharmacy Director

REFERENCE:

JCAHO 2004 National Patient Safety Goals

ABBREVIATIONS THAT CANNOT BE USED : (JCAHO DO NOT USE LIST)

<u>DON’T write</u>	<u>DO write</u>
U or u	Units
IU	International Unit
QD, Qd, or qd	Daily or every day
QOD, or qod	Every other day
µg or ug	Mcg or microgram
QHS, qhs, or hs	Every evening or at bedtime
MSO4, MGSO4, MS	Morphine Sulfate or Magnesium Sulfate
S.C. or S.Q.	Subcutaneously

IN ADDITION:

- **Always use a zero before a decimal: e.g. write “0.5 mg” rather than “.5 mg”;**
- **Never use a trailing zero after a decimal: e.g. write “7 mg” rather than “7.0 mg”.**

Approved By: Beryl Brooks (ADMR,COMP AMB HEALTH CARE CENTER), Lee Dunham (ASSISTANT NURSING DIRECTOR, ADMINISTRATION), Ruth Oren (CHIEF PHYSICIAN I ANESTHESIOLOGY)	
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