Beebe Healthcare

Health Information Management

Abbreviations, Symbols and Acronyms in the Medical Record	Date Issued: 01/04
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[ ] Condition of Participation [X] Joint Commission Standard IM.02.02.01 [ ] Department Specific Regulation	Reviewed: 03/11, CPC 05/14, CPC 4/15

PURPOSE To establish a uniform list of approved abbreviations and symbols, and to establish a standardized list of abbreviation, acronyms, symbols, and dose designations that are not to be used in the medical record.

SCOPE Commitment to quality in documentation and patient care. Patients at Beebe Healthcare and it entities.

POLICY Abbreviations, acronyms, and symbols may be used in the medical record only when they are clearly understood or listed on the list in Stedman's Medical Dictionary: Abbreviations, Acronyms, and Symbols approved and adopted by the Medical Records Committee 5/31/17 (original adoption date 7/31/13). The medical record should not contain abbreviations and symbols that pose a risk to patient safety (as listed on the "Official Do-Not-Use" list).

PROCEDURE

   a.   Abbreviations, acronyms, and symbols should be used in the medical record only when their meaning is clearly understood or when they are listed in Stedman's Medical Dictionary: Abbreviations, Acronyms, and Symbols approved and adopted by the Medical Records Committee.

   b.   Symbols and abbreviations should not be used when documenting final diagnoses and procedures in the discharge summary. Clinicians are discouraged from using abbreviations for medications and diagnoses of malignancies.

   c.   The list of unapproved abbreviations will be updated and modified to match changes made by the Joint Commission. The current list of unapproved abbreviations is as follows:

Joint Commission Official "Do Not Use" List[1]

Do Not Use	Potential Problem	Use Instead
U, u (unit)	Mistaken for "0" (zero), the number "4" (four) or "cc"	Write "unit"
IU (International Unit)	Mistaken for IV (intravenous) or the number 10 (ten)	Write "International Unit"
Q.D., QD, q.d., qd (daily) Q.O.D., QOD, q.o.d, qod(every other day)	Mistaken for each other Period after the Q mistaken for "I" and the "O" mistaken for "I"	Write "daily" Write "every other day"
Trailing zero (X.0 mg)* Lack of leading zero (.X mg)	Decimal point is missed	Write X mg Write 0.X mg
MS MSO_4 and $MgSO_4$	Can mean morphine sulfate or magnesium sulfate Confused for one another	Write "morphine sulfate" Write "magnesium sulfate"

[1] Applies to all orders and all medication-related documentation that is handwritten (including free-text computer entry) or on pre-printed forms.

*Exception: A "trailing zero" may be used only where required to demonstrate the level of precision of the value being reported, such as for laboratory results, imaging studies that report size of lesions, or catheter/tube sizes. It may not be used in medication orders or other medication-related documentation.