

 <p>Winnipeg Regional Health Authority Office régional de la santé de Winnipeg Caring for Health À l'écoute de notre santé</p> <p>POLICY</p>	<p>REGIONAL</p> <p>Applicable to all WRHA governed and funded sites / facilities / hospitals / personal care homes, unless specifically excluded</p>		<p>Level:</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 24pt;">1</p>
	<p>Policy Name:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Medication Order Writing Standards</p>	<p>Policy Number:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">110.170.040</p>	<p>Page</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1 of 3</p>
	<p>Approval Signature:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Original signed by Dr. B. Postl</i></p>	<p>Section:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CLINICAL SERVICES</p>	
	<p>Date:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">JULY 2007</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Appendix revised: March 2009</p>	<p>Supersedes:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">January 2006</p>	

1.0 **PURPOSE:**

- 1.1 To ensure the details of Medication Orders are clear.
- 1.2 To ensure Medication Orders are legible and comply with order writing standards.
- 1.3 To mandate for all WRHA employees and members of the Medical Staff, Medication Order practices that recognize and promote patient safety by reducing the opportunity for medication error.

2.0 **DEFINITIONS:**

Medication Order: any hand-written, typed, pre-printed, or electronic order for a drug, vaccine, intravenous fluid therapy, or any such similar therapies ordered by a duly authorized practitioner for administration to or by a patient under the care of the practitioner.

3.0 **POLICY:**

- 3.1 A Medication Order must be legible and shall comply with the order writing standards as outlined in the following procedure.
- 3.2 Abbreviations, acronyms, and symbols listed in the Appendix shall not be permitted on a Medication Order or a medication related document, chart, form or label. The use of all other abbreviations and acronyms is discouraged.
- 3.3 No health care provider shall act upon or carry out a Medication Order that is ambiguous. The individual shall first seek clarification from the individual who wrote the Medication Order.
- 3.4 A Medication Order in which a banned abbreviation, acronym, or symbol (as appearing in the Appendix) has been employed, shall, by definition, be considered ambiguous and subject to the provisions of 3.3 above.

4.0 **PROCEDURE:**

Medication Order Writing Standards

- 4.1 A Medication Order must be printed or written legibly by an authorized prescriber.
- 4.2 A Medication Order must be clear and unambiguous.
- 4.3 A Medication Order must comply with WRHA Formulary requirements and restrictions.

- 4.4 Use of the metric system is compulsory. Apothecary or avoirdupois units are not acceptable.
- 4.5 A Medication Order for pediatric patients who weigh 50 kg or less must include the dosage by weight in terms of 'milligrams per kilogram per day' or 'milligrams per kilogram per dose' OR by body surface area ('milligram per square meter per dose or day').
- 4.6 The desired therapeutic outcome, indication for prescribing, or treatment goal must be included on the prescription for a prn (give as needed) Medication Order to assist other health care professionals in administering and monitoring the intended therapy. Imprecise endpoints (such as 'titrate to effect') are not acceptable.
- 4.7 Imprecise and broad Medication Orders shall not be accepted.
- 4.8 Exact dosage strengths (such as milligrams) must be specified rather than dosage form units (such as one tablet or one vial).
- 4.9 A Medication Order must be complete and must include:
- patient name (addressograph imprint acceptable)
 - patient number (addressograph imprint acceptable)
 - date and time of order
 - generic drug name
 - route of administration
 - site of administration (as appropriate)
 - dose
 - dosage form
 - strength
 - quantity
 - dilution, rate and time of administration (as appropriate)
 - frequency of administration
 - patient weight when it may be a consideration in selecting drug dose (pediatrics; extremely underweight or overweight patients; or weight-based dosing)
 - desired therapeutic outcome, indication for prescribing, or treatment goal for prn (give as needed) orders
- 4.10 Where the generic name may be confused with other agents (look-a-like or sound-a-like name), the trade name should be used, preferably in conjunction with the generic name.
- 4.11 Once written, an original Medication Order may not later be physically altered in any way. A subsequent Medication Order must be written to cancel the original Medication Order and to clarify the prescriber's intent.
- 4.12 The Prescriber's signature must appear at the end of each Medication Order or Medication Order set, followed by the prescriber's unique license / registration number, or printed name and professional designation.

5.0 **REFERENCES:**

- 5.1 Institute for Safe Medication Practices (www.ismp-canada.org)
- 5.2 Manitoba Pharmaceutical Association Guidelines on the Standards of Practice in Hospital Pharmacy

Policy Contact: Dr. Kevin Hall, Chair, Medication System Safety Subcommittee.

Appendix: Banned Abbreviations, Acronyms, and Symbols			
Unacceptable Abbreviation / Dose Expression	Intended Meaning	Misinterpretation	Recommendation
QD, qd OD, od	Every day	Mistaken as qid or Mistaken as right eye	Write out 'daily'
QOD, qod, eod	Every other day	Mistaken for QD or QID if poorly written	Use 'every other day'
U, u, iu, I.U.	Units or international units	Next to a number, the 'u' can look like a 0, resulting in a 10 fold increase in dose	Use 'units' or 'international units' as appropriate
.x	Leading decimal point	Can easily be missed, resulting in a 10 fold increase in dose	Always use a leading zero (0.x)
x.0	Trailing zero	Decimal point can be missed and result in a 10 fold increase in dose.	Do not use a trailing zero (x mg)
SL	Sublingual	Misunderstood for SC	Write out 'sublingual'
SC or SQ or sub q	Subcutaneous	Misunderstood for SL	Use 'Subcut' or write 'subcutaneous'
AU, AS, AD	Both ears, left ear, right ear	Mistaken for OU, OS, OD (eye)	Write out full meaning
OU, OS, OD	Both eyes, left eye, right eye	Mistaken for AU, AS, AD (ear), or for once daily	Write out full meaning
Abbreviated drug** names (e.g. AZT, CPZ, HCTZ, MSO4)		May be mistaken for other drugs	Write out drug name in full
ug, µg	Microgram	Mistaken for mg	Write out 'microgram' or mcg
D/C	Discharge or discontinue	Discontinue or Discharge	Write out discharge or discontinue
cc	Cubic centimetre	Mistaken for u (units)	Use mL or millilitre
@	At	Mistaken for 2 (two) or 5 (five)	Write 'at'
>	Greater than	Mistaken for 7 (seven) or the letter L	Write out 'greater than' or 'more than' or 'less than' or lower than'
<	Less than	Confused with each other	

** Note: Common abbreviations for elements may be acceptable if clearly written (e.g. K, Na, Cl, Zn, Mg, Fe, Ca)