

<b>Vermont Psychiatric Care Hospital Policy and Procedure</b>		
<b>Unacceptable Abbreviations</b>		
Effective: September 2014	Revised: September 2024	Due for Review: September 2026

**POLICY**

Medical errors have been identified as the fourth most common cause of patient deaths in the United States. To help reduce the numbers of errors related to incorrect use of terminology, the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations issued a list of abbreviations, acronyms and symbols that should no longer be used.


Guidelines and regulations set forth by ISMP and The Joint Commission will be enforced at Vermont Psychiatric Care Hospital (VPCH). The action supports one of the Joint Commission national patient safety goals: to improve the effectiveness of communications among caregivers. VPCH strives to improve the effectiveness of communication among caregivers and to reduce the use of dangerous abbreviations that can contribute to medication orders.

**PROCEDURE**

The Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee will develop, maintain, and update a list of unacceptable abbreviations whereby medication orders are subject to this initiative, but so is all clinical documentation, including orders, progress notes, consultation reports, as well as educational materials and protocols. The list will be posted at each nursing station and other locations needed for physician review. The Electronic Health Record is designed that all medication orders will not include any of the unapproved list of abbreviations No unacceptable abbreviations will be allowed.

**Attachments**

Appendix A: Unacceptable Abbreviations List (approved 4/2024)

Approved by	Signature	Date
Emily Hawes, Commissioner, Vermont Department of Mental Health	 <p>DocuSigned by: <i>Emily Hawes</i> C50275615A62462...</p>	9/25/2024

**Appendix A**

<b>The "DO NOT USE LIST" of dangerous abbreviations, acronyms, and symbols    Approved 4/2024</b>			
<b>UNACCEPTABLE ABBREVIATION LIST</b>			
<b>Set</b>	<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Potential Problem</b>	<b>Preferred Term</b>
1.	U (for unit)	Mistaken as zero, four or cc.	Write "unit"
2.	IU (for international unit)	Mistaken as IV (intravenous) or 10 (ten)	Write "international unit"
3.	Q.D., Q.O.D. (Latin abbreviation for once daily and every other day)	Mistaken for each other. The period after the Q can be mistaken for an "I" and the "O" can be mistaken for "I"	Write "daily" and "every other day"
4.	Trailing zero (X.0 mg), Lack of leading zero (.X mg)	Decimal point is missed	Never write a zero by itself after a decimal point (X mg), and always use a zero before a decimal point (0.X mg)
5.	MS MSO <sub>4</sub> MgSO <sub>4</sub>	Confused for one another Can mean morphine sulfate or magnesium sulfate	Write "morphine sulfate" or "magnesium sulfate"