

Medical Abbreviations

General Discussion:

Misreading medical abbreviations can be the cause of serious medication errors. There are myriads of examples in medical literature of resident hospitalizations or deaths because a prescription or treatment order was misread due to the use of abbreviations. Although this is a well documented concern, it still occurs because the perception is that using abbreviations saves time. Reducing or eliminating abbreviations would be one intervention to address resident safety in medication administration. To this end, the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) requires its members to follow a “do not use list”:

<http://www.jointcommission.org/PatientSafety/DoNotUseList/>

Relevant Regulations:

Although there are no specific regulations related to the use of medical abbreviations for any of the four provider types, you should consider best practices in the use of medical abbreviations to protect the health, safety and welfare of your residents.

Relevant DQA Memos:

Other Resources:

[The Joint Commission Official “Do Not Use” List](#)

[The Joint Commission National Patient Safety Goals](#)

[ISMP and FDA Campaign to Eliminate Use of Error-Prone Abbreviations](#)

[Abbreviations by Medilexicon](#)

[Clinicians Ultimate Reference for Abbreviations](#)

[JDMD/Guide for Medical & Dental Abbreviations](#)

Best Practice, Tools & Forms:

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