



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
BUREAU OF MEDICINE AND SURGERY  
7700 ARLINGTON BOULEVARD  
FALLS CHURCH VA 22042

Canc: Oct 2021  
IN REPLY REFER TO  
BUMEDNOTE 6150  
BUMED-M5  
20 Oct 2020

BUMED NOTICE 6150

From: Chief, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery

Subj: INTERIM CHANGE TO MANUAL OF THE MEDICAL DEPARTMENT

Ref: (a) NAVMED P-117  
(b) The Joint Commission Accreditation Manual for Hospitals, Ambulatory Care, Behavioral Health Care, and Home Care

Encl: (1) "Do Not Use" Dose Designations and Abbreviations

1. Purpose. To update guidelines for the use of medical and dental abbreviations on medical and dental forms. This notice provides additional guidance and supersedes the guidance in reference (a), Manual of the Medical Department (MANMED) in:

- a. MANMED Chapter 16, article 16-15, subparagraph (10)(f).
- b. MANMED Chapter 21, article 21-3, subparagraphs (2)(f)14 and (3)(b)8.

2. Scope and Applicability. Applies to Ships and Stations having Medical and Dental Department personnel.

3. Background. Inconsistencies in medical and dental abbreviations are a potential source of miscommunication between providers and may result in adverse patient outcomes. All Navy medical and dental commands must utilize a standardized set of medical and dental abbreviations to alleviate inconsistencies and errors.


4. Action. Navy medical and dental commands must comply with enclosure (1). This list was developed based on reference (b) requirements and Navy data analysis. In utilizing abbreviations, additional guidelines must be adhered to:

- a. Any medical or dental abbreviations used must be from standardized medical and dental terminology references or resources.
- b. Abbreviations and symbols will not be used to record final diagnoses, but are permitted elsewhere in the medical and dental records where they do not hamper communication between practitioners.

5. Records Management

a. Records created as a result of this notice, regardless of format or media, must be maintained and dispositioned per the records disposition schedules located on the Department of the Navy Directorate for Administration, Logistics, and Operations, Directives and Records Management Division portal page at <https://portal.secnav.navy.mil/orgs/DUSNM/DONAA/DRM/Records-and-Information-Management/Approved%20Record%20Schedules/Forms/AllItems.aspx>.

b. For questions concerning the management of records related to this notice or the records disposition schedules, please contact the local records manager or the Department of the Navy Directorate for Administration, Logistics, and Operations, Directives and Records Management Division program office.

  
G. D. SHAFFER  
Acting

Releasability and distribution:

This notice is cleared for public release and is available electronically only via the Navy Medicine Web site, <http://www.med.navy.mil/directives/Pages/BUMEDNotes.aspx>

“DO NOT USE” DOSE DESIGNATIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

To improve patient safety and avoid errors and potential harm, Navy Medicine has standardized the list of do not use dose designations and abbreviations. These dose designations and abbreviations apply to all orders, preprinted forms, prescription labels, and medication-related documentation that are handwritten, including free-text computer entry.

“DO NOT USE” DOSE DESIGNATIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS			
Dangerous Term	Intended Meaning	Potential Problem	Correction
“Trailing Zeros”	Example: Dose of 1mg written as 1.0mg	Decimal may be misinterpreted or overlooked in handwriting and with the use of carbon and faxed copies resulting in 10-fold overdose	*Never use a “trailing” zero!  Warfarin 2mg
“Naked Decimals” or Lack of Leading Zero	Example: Dose of 0.5mg written as .5mg	Decimal may be misinterpreted or overlooked in handwriting and with the use of carbon and faxed copies resulting in 10-fold overdose	Never use a naked” decimal! Always use a zero before a decimal.  Morphine 0.5mg
U or u	Unit	Read as a zero (0) or a four (4), causing a 10-fold overdose or greater (4U seen as “40” or 4u seen as 44”)	“Unit” has no acceptable abbreviation. Write out “unit.”
µg	Microgram	Mistaken for “mg” when handwritten	Use “mcg” or “micrograms”
Q.D., QD, q.d., qd, or Q/D	Every Day or Daily	Mistaken for QID and drug given four times daily	Write out “every day” or “daily”
Q.O.D., QOD, q.o.d., or qod	Every other Day	Mistaken for QID or QD	Write out “every other day”
MgSO4	Magnesium Sulfate	Misread as Morphine Sulfate	Use complete spelling for drug names
MS or MSO4	Morphine Sulfate	Misread as Magnesium Sulfate	
I.U. or IU	International Unit	Mistaken as IV (intravenous) or 10 (ten)	Write out “International Unit”
T.I.W	Three times a week	Misinterpreted as “three times a day” or “twice a week”	Write out “three times a week”
SS	Sliding Scale or 1/2 (apothecary)	Misinterpreted as “55”	Write out “sliding scale” use “one-half” or 1/2

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 lesion size or catheter and tube sizes. It may not be used in medication orders or other medication related documentation. Adapted from the 2020 Joint Commission Standard IM.02.02.01. The hospital effectively manages the collection of health information.