

LEE HEALTH POLICY & PROCEDURES

PROPER USE OF ABBREVIATIONS IN MEDICAL RECORD (UNSAFE ABBREVIATION LIST)		LOCATOR NUMBER																					
T Y P E	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> System-wide - A formal statement of values, intents (policy), and expectations (procedure) that applies to every employee throughout the System. <input type="checkbox"/> Multidisciplinary/Interdisciplinary - A formal statement of values, intents (policy), and expectations (procedure) that applies to more than one discipline and is usually of a clinical nature. Check below all areas to which this applies. <input type="checkbox"/> Departmental - A formal statement of values, intents (policy), and expectations (procedure) exclusive to a particular department or group of people within a department at one or multiple locations that does not impact any other area.	CHAPTER: S10 TAB: 02 POLICY #: 741																					
Disciplines / locations to which this interdisciplinary policy applies:																							
<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%;"><input type="checkbox"/> Health Information Management</td> <td style="width: 33%;"><input type="checkbox"/> Pharmacy</td> <td style="width: 33%;"><input type="checkbox"/> Acute Care Hospital Nursing</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Services</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Plant Operations</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Outpatient Services</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Information Systems</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Radiology</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Home Health</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Laboratory</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Rehabilitation Services</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Skilled Nursing Services</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Legal Services</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Respiratory</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Physician Offices</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Nutrition</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Security</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Rehab Hospital</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Other</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>			<input type="checkbox"/> Health Information Management	<input type="checkbox"/> Pharmacy	<input type="checkbox"/> Acute Care Hospital Nursing	<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Services	<input type="checkbox"/> Plant Operations	<input type="checkbox"/> Outpatient Services	<input type="checkbox"/> Information Systems	<input type="checkbox"/> Radiology	<input type="checkbox"/> Home Health	<input type="checkbox"/> Laboratory	<input type="checkbox"/> Rehabilitation Services	<input type="checkbox"/> Skilled Nursing Services	<input type="checkbox"/> Legal Services	<input type="checkbox"/> Respiratory	<input type="checkbox"/> Physician Offices	<input type="checkbox"/> Nutrition	<input type="checkbox"/> Security	<input type="checkbox"/> Rehab Hospital	<input type="checkbox"/> Other		
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Date Originated: 8/89	Reviewed/No Revision: 8/01, 4/07, 6/10, 6/12, 6/14, 8/16	Dates Revised: 3/95, 4/98, 6/02, 4/05, 1/08, 7/08, 8/18 Next Review Date: 8/20																					
Author(s): Karen Wiley, RHIT																							
Reviewed by: <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 60%;">Clinical Practice Council:</td> <td style="width: 40%;">Date: _____</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Clinical Education Council</td> <td>Education Completed: _____</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Education Plan Required: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</td> <td>Date: _____</td> </tr> </table>			Clinical Practice Council:	Date: _____	Clinical Education Council	Education Completed: _____	Education Plan Required: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Date: _____															
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Approved by: <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30%;">Policy Administrator:</td> <td style="width: 40%;">Anne Rose, Vice President, Revenue Cycle</td> <td style="width: 30%;">Date: 8/13/18</td> </tr> </table>			Policy Administrator:	Anne Rose, Vice President, Revenue Cycle	Date: 8/13/18																		
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As Needed: <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 70%;">Medical Director:</td> <td style="width: 30%;">Date: _____</td> </tr> </table>			Medical Director:	Date: _____																			
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PURPOSE:

To provide guidelines for the use of abbreviations in patient medical records; avoid the use of abbreviations which may compromise patient safety; provide a list of unacceptable and potentially dangerous abbreviations and dose expressions; and outline the steps to be taken when an unsafe abbreviation or dose expression is encountered.

DEFINITION:

An **unsafe abbreviation** is a potentially dangerous abbreviation or dose expression that does not clearly communicate the intended meaning and has been documented in the medical literature as contributing to medical errors.

POLICY:

- A. Abbreviations may be used in documentation in medical records, but should not be used in writing the final diagnoses.
 - 1. The Medical Executive Committee has approved Stedman's Medical Abbreviations, Acronyms & Symbols as the standard reference for abbreviations used in hospital medical records.
 - 2. The exception to this will be the attached listing of unsafe, unacceptable abbreviations and dose expressions.
- B. Abbreviations not listed in Stedman's Medical Abbreviations, Acronyms & Symbols may be used
 - 1. when required as part of electronic systems,
 - 2. provided a list of these abbreviations is submitted to Health Information Management in advance of use.
- C. Other Lee Health entities may approve the use of abbreviations as appropriate to their respective care setting.
- D. **The unsafe, unacceptable abbreviations and dose expressions are NOT ALLOWED to be used anywhere within Lee Health.**

PROCEDURE:

- A. All abbreviations used in hospital medical records should be found in Stedman's Medical Abbreviations, Acronyms & Symbols. The link to the online version can be found on IntraLee within the Medical Library website under [Stedman's Medical Abbreviations](#).
- B. When implementing a system that requires the use of abbreviations in hospital medical records:
 - 1. Submit a list of the proposed abbreviations to Health Information Management.
 - 2. The System Director of Health Information Management will either approve the use of the abbreviations or refer them to the Medical Executive Committee as appropriate.
- C. All professional staff will be supplied with a list of unsafe, unacceptable abbreviations ([FM # 0849](#)). The list will be posted on all nursing units and will be placed inside the patient charts.

- D. New professional staff will be given a list of unsafe, unacceptable abbreviations at orientation or at the time of joining the Medical Staff. Current Medical staff will be issued the list of unsafe, unacceptable abbreviations by the Medical Staff President / Chief.
- E. The unsafe, unacceptable abbreviation list may be expanded as required by regulatory agencies.
- F. Lee Health's first concern is for the overall safety of our patients, this philosophy should always be considered first when applying this policy.
- G. If, in the professional judgment of the healthcare clinician providing the care, the order is clear and complete and the delay to obtain confirmation prior to the execution of the order would place the patient at greater risk, the healthcare clinician should carry out the order. Confirmation shall be obtained as soon as possible thereafter.

RELATED POLICIES:

M03 03 536 Look-Alike Sound-Alike Medications

S10 02 513 Legibility of Medical Record Entries

S10 02 789 Secure Messaging

M14 03 116 Medical Record Documentation Performance Improvement Process

REFERENCES:

Institute for Safe Medication Practices