

Washtenaw County Community Mental Health

**ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS - CLINICAL RECORDS – (policy)**

**PURPOSE**

Information on the unacceptable use of some abbreviations and symbols in clinical records.

**POLICY**

Use of abbreviations on the Official DO NOT USE List is prohibited.

**DEFINITIONS**

Abbreviation - any symbol or group of letters used in place of a complete spelling of a word or set of words.

**PROCEDURES**

*(see procedures manual)*

**REFERENCES**

- Joint Commission standards

**EXHIBITS**

- A. Prohibited Abbreviations

Exhibit A – Prohibited Abbreviations

**Official “Do Not Use” List<sup>1</sup>**

<b>Do Not Use</b>	<b>Potential Problem</b>	<b>Use Instead</b>
U,u (unit)	Mistaken for “0” (zero), the number “4” (four) or “cc”	Write "unit"
IU (International Unit)	Mistaken for IV (intravenous) or the number 10 (ten)	Write "International Unit"
<b>Q.D., QD, q.d., qd (daily)</b> <b>Q.O.D., QOD, q.o.d, qod (every other day)</b>	<b>Mistaken for each other</b> <b>Period after the Q mistaken for "I" and the "O" mistaken for "1"</b>	<b>Write "daily"</b> <b>Write "every other day"</b>
Trailing zero (X.0 mg) <sup>2</sup> Lack of leading zero (.X mg)	Decimal point is missed	Write X mg Write 0.X mg
MS  MSO <sub>4</sub> and MgSO <sub>4</sub>	Can mean morphine sulfate or magnesium sulfate  Confused for one another	Write "morphine sulfate" Write "magnesium sulfate"

<sup>1</sup>The prohibited list applies to all orders, preprinted forms, and medication-related documentation. Medication related documentation can be either handwritten or electronic.

<sup>2</sup> 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 size of lesions, or catheter/tube sizes. It may not be used in medication orders or other medication-related documentation.