

**MEDICAL STAFF POLICY**

Title:	Commonly Used Clinical Abbreviations, Acronyms, and Symbols	Page 1 of 2
Policy No:	1 MS 017	Effective Date: 04/01/11

**OBJECTIVE**

To provide a mechanism for the compilation and maintenance of, and amendments to, a standardized set of clinical abbreviations, acronyms, and symbols to be used for documenting patient information, and for the design of health record forms and related documents, including electronic views.

**SCOPE**

This policy encompasses the DMC Medical Staff commonly used Clinical Abbreviations, Acronyms, and Symbols List ('The List') and its maintenance. This includes requests for additions/changes to, and removals from, the contents of 'The List,' including abbreviations, acronyms, symbols, and their descriptions/uses. It also covers dissemination and use across all DMC Clinical Care sites.

**POLICY**

All requests for additions/changes to, or removals from The List must follow a formal process of review and approval. Requests must be submitted in writing to the DMC Executive Director, Health Information Management. Requests must be routed through Chiefs of Staff or Specialists in Chief of the Medical Staff, clinical service executives or administrators, department directors or other DMC executives.

During clinical information system development, Information Services Project Leads, Product Specialists, or the User Liaisons, may also submit requests to the DMC Executive Director, Health Information Management.

Health Information Management will review and research all requests for additions/changes to, or removals from, The List prior to submitting them to the DMC Medical Record Committee for consideration. Once approved by the DMC Medical Record Committee, Health Information Management will update The List and forward to ISD for addition to the IntraWeb.

**DEFINITIONS**

1. Abbreviation - a shortened form of a written word or phrase used in place of the whole [Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2010].
2. Acronym – a word formed from the initial letter or letters of each of the successive parts or major parts of a compound term [Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2010].
3. Symbol - something that stands for or suggests something else by reason of relationship, association, convention, or accidental resemblance [Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2010].
4. Description - the literal text, i.e., the written word or phrase, associated with an abbreviation, or the approved use of the abbreviation, acronym, or symbol.
5. Start Date - the date on which an abbreviation, acronym, symbol, or description became active.
6. Stop Date - the date on which an abbreviation, acronym, symbol, or description became inactivate.

**PROVISIONS**

1. The List was compiled from existing commonly used abbreviation, acronym, and symbol lists from throughout the DMC Operating Units.
2. The List is sorted in alphabetical order according to the abbreviation or acronym. Symbols appear at the end of The List.
3. The duration that an abbreviation, acronym, or symbol is in use is noted in The List with both a start date and a stop date.
4. All changes that have been made to The List since its approval on February 16, 1998, are noted on a "Changes" page at the beginning of The List.

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All entries to The List are created using the DMC Abbreviation Rules [see DMC IntraWeb: Select Medical Affairs, then in the drop-down menu, select Health Information Management. Select DMC Abbreviations to view the related rules and The List.] In addition, The List, as well as the list of 'Do Not Use' abbreviations, may also be viewed from the Pharmacy link on the IntraWeb. It is intended that abbreviations, acronyms, symbols, and their descriptions are not to be used after their stop date. It is understood that adherence to The List will be expected with electronic documentation of patient information.

- The office of the Executive Director, Health Information Management shall manage dissemination of the DMC Abbreviation List.

**REFERENCES**

Comprehensive Accreditation Manual for Hospitals, 2011 Standard IM.02.02.01, EPs 2 and 3; Standard FAQ  
DMC Rules and Regulations  
Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2010

**ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITY**

The Chief Medical Officer and the President of the Medical Staff have operational day-to day responsibility for this policy.

**APPROVAL SIGNATURE(S)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
President/ DMC Medical Staff

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Executive Vice President/Chief Medical Officer/DMC

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**REVIEW DATE**  
03/2014

**SUPERSEDES**  
04/01/02; 10/01/04; 05/01/08

Revised JCC: 3.22.11