

**UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA COLLEGE OF MEDICINE JACKSONVILLE
Resident Manual**

PRESCRIPTION WRITING GUIDELINES

A written prescription for drugs **MUST** be legibly printed or typed and contain the following information:

- Name of prescribing practitioner
- Name and strength of medication
- Quantity of the drug in **both** textual and numeric formats (e.g. #45 forty-five)
- Directions for use
- Dated with the month written in textual letters (e.g. July 10, 2004, not 7/10/04)
- Signed by the prescribing practitioner on the day when issued

Tips to Reduce Errors

1. All prescriptions must be legible and written in black ink.
2. Avoid abbreviations and dangerous dose expressions (see below).
3. All prescriptions should include a brief notation of purpose, unless deemed inappropriate (e.g. for nausea, for blood pressure, etc.).
4. Sign your name as if it were a legal document. Never pre-sign a blank prescription.
5. Always use a leading zero before a number less than one (e.g. 0.5 mg) and never use a terminal zero (e.g. 5.0 gm).
6. Write out the actual amount prescribed in addition to giving the Arabic number or Roman numeral to discourage alterations.
7. Do not make any changes or cross-outs.
8. Never loan your prescription pads to anyone and contact the pharmacy immediately if they are misplaced or stolen.
9. Prescribe medications from the Shands Jacksonville Formulary of Approved Drugs, which can be found at <http://intrashands1/Pharmacy/default.asp>.

Medication safety and error avoidance organizations such as the Institute for Safe Medication Practices (ISMP) and JCAHO have recommended that abbreviations and dangerous dose expressions be avoided when prescribing medications because of the increased risk of medication errors. The following table outlines abbreviations and dangerous dose expressions that are **not allowed** at Shands Jacksonville.

UNACCEPTABLE	CORRECT USAGE
"MS" and "MSO ₄ " or "MgSO ₄ " for morphine sulfate or magnesium sulfate.	Write "morphine sulfate" Write "magnesium sulfate"
"u" or "IU" for units	Spell out the word "units"
"q.d." "qd" "Q.D." "QD" or "OD" for daily	Spell out the word "daily"
"Q.O.D." for every other day	Spell out "every other day"
Trailing zero such as "5.0"	Do not use a zero after a decimal point such as "5"
Decimal point without a leading zero such as ".5" (mistaken for 5)	Use leading zero before a decimal point such as "0.5"

NOTE: Abbreviations on this list should NOT be used in any of its forms – **upper or lower case; with or without periods.**

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Prescription Pads for Residents

Residents appointed to the UFHSC/J who do not have a Florida license will be registered by the UFHSC/J Office of Educational Affairs (OEA) as unlicensed physicians with the Florida Board of Medicine. As part of this process, the Florida Board of Medicine issues TRN numbers to each unlicensed resident with a Medical Degree. The Florida Board of Osteopathic Medicine similarly issues UO numbers. The Office of Educational Affairs provides the TRN/UO numbers to the Department of Pharmacy. Individualized prescription pads for resident physicians are produced, and contain the resident's name, resident physician title, residency program name, unlicensed (TRN, UO) number (or an ME license number if the resident has a Florida license), the institutional DEA number, prescriber number (computer number) and an expiration date equivalent to the anticipated date of graduation.

- If a resident is, for any reason, no longer appointed as a UFHSC/J resident, all remaining prescription pads must be returned to the Pharmacy. The Office of Educational Affairs will provide termination data to the Department of Pharmacy.
- Prescription pads shall always be in the possession of the individual practitioner to minimize the opportunity for theft or diversion.
- These blanks are for use on the Shands Jacksonville campus **only**.

Florida's Medicaid Program requires a license number on all prescription claims. If the resident physician uses a prescription pad that is not personalized, it will be necessary to write the "TRN/UO" number on all prescriptions for patients with Florida Medicaid. Medicaid will deny payment for claims that do not contain a license or ID number.

Prescribing Controlled Substances: The Federal Controlled Substance Act (CSA) is the principal federal law regulating the manufacture, distribution, dispensing and delivery of drugs which have the potential for abuse or dependence. All drugs that fall under this designation are classified into five schedules as "controlled substances" depending upon their abuse potential.

Federal law states that a prescription for a controlled substance may be issued only by individual practitioners who are authorized to prescribe controlled substances by the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) in the jurisdiction where they are licensed to practice their profession. The term "individual practitioner" includes physicians (MD and DO), dentists (DDS), veterinarians (DVM), and podiatrists (DPM). In the state of Florida, mid-level practitioners such as nurse practitioners, nurse midwives, nurse anesthetists, clinical nurse specialists, and physician assistants are not authorized to prescribe controlled substances. [To obtain a DEA registration number, physicians can write to or call the Orlando DEA Division Office, 300 International Parkway, Suite 424, Heathrow, FL 32746, (407)333-7046.]

Hospitals must register with the DEA as institutional providers. A hospital's DEA registration will permit its residents to dispense, administer or prescribe controlled substances for hospital inpatients. However, a physician may not order "take-home" controlled drugs via a chart order. Medication orders for controlled drugs should be for medications dispensed for immediate administration, not for a supply of take-home medications, which should be written via an outpatient prescription.

Residents may prescribe outpatient controlled drug prescriptions if they have a valid individual DEA registration number AND medical license OR if they are appropriately registered with the Board of Medicine as an unlicensed physician in a training program and use the institution's DEA number with a unique suffix.

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Outpatient prescriptions for controlled drugs must be written on individualized blanks which contain the prescriber's name, department, DEA number, and Shands Jacksonville computer number. The blanks may also be used for non-controlled substances. Only write for one controlled drug per prescription blank. No other medications may be written on the same prescription.

All outpatient prescriptions for controlled substances must be dated and signed on the day written and must bear the full name and address of the patient, the drug name, strength, dosage form, quantity prescribed, directions for use, and the name, address, and DEA number of the prescriber. Written prescriptions for controlled substances will not be filled unless a licensed physician signs the prescription and a valid DEA number is written on the prescription.

Oral prescriptions are permitted for drugs in Schedule III-IV, and therefore, do not require the actual signature of the prescribing physician. Oral prescriptions for Schedule II drugs are not permitted. A prescription for a Schedule II drug must be handwritten or typed and must be signed by the prescribing physician in the same way that he would sign a check or legal document (full name). Prescriptions for controlled substances, other than Schedule IIs, are valid for six months from the date they were written and may be refilled, as prescribed, up to five times during the six month period. Under Florida law, refills for Schedule IIs are not permitted.