

December 21, 1994

MEMORANDUM

TO: Hospital Administrators

FROM: 
Alan Samuels, Director
Division of Health Licensing

SUBJECT: Conditions that will allow a provider-wide partial exception to the requirements of Section 601.6 (orders for medication and treatment) of Regulation 61-16, Standards for Licensing Hospitals and Institutional General Infirmaries.

Section 601.6 of R61-16 requires: "All medical records shall contain the orders for medication and treatment written in ink and signed by the prescriber or his designee. All orders, including verbal orders, shall be properly recorded in the medical record and dated and signed by the prescriber or designee within 48 hours."

Hospitals have experienced difficulty in meeting R61-16, Section 601.6 standards. We also recognize that applying this requirement categorically may interfere with other functions more directly related to quality patient care. In the interest of establishing reasonable standards which can be met by providers and yet do not compromise the health and welfare of patients cared for in South Carolina hospitals we have determined that an alternative standard will be considered as acceptable.

All hospitals will be required to meet either the standard outlined in Regulation 61-16, Section 601.6 or, as an alternative:

A. The hospital's medical staff shall identify and list categories of diagnostic or therapeutic verbal orders (associated with any potential hazard to the patient) that must be authenticated by the prescriber. A copy of this list shall be maintained at each nurses' station.

B. Schedule II controlled substances must be included on the list of drugs which shall be authenticated by the prescriber.

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C. Verbal orders designated by the medical staff as requiring authentication shall be countersigned and dated by the prescriber or designee within a time frame defined in hospital policy, but in no case more than two (2) days after the order was given.

D. All other R61-16 standards shall apply unless specifically excepted.

This standard in Section 601.6 will be enforced during inspections, as required either by the regulation or the exception.

Please also refer to R61-16, Section 404.3A. for standards on the subject of who may give orders for patient care. Standards on who may receive verbal orders are found in R61-16, Section 404.3B., "Verbal and telephone orders shall be given only to a licensed nurse and immediately recorded, dated and signed. This restriction shall not be construed to prohibit the issuance and acceptance of verbal orders in other specialized departments or services as authorized in the medical staff by-laws, e.g., orders pertaining to respiratory therapy modalities and medications administered therewith may be given to respiratory personnel, radiology instructions to radiology technicians, and physical therapy orders to physical therapists..."

If there are any questions, you may call (803) 737-7202.

AS/DLG/ms

cc: Doug Bryant, Commissioner
Alice Truluck
William Yates
Karen Reeves