SUBJECT: Medication Distribution – Automatic Stop Orders

Purpose:

Automatic stop orders may be used by hospitals to protect patients against excessive medications, potential adverse effects, and continuation of therapy that is no longer necessary. Regulatory and accreditation bodies require an automatic stop order policy.

Policy:

The need for specified automatic stop orders is determined by the Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee, which gains approval of their recommendations from the Medical Staff. Automatic discontinuation of all medication orders shall be performed according to accreditation standards and appropriate patient care issues. Specific instances for automatic discontinuation of medication orders include surgical procedures, antimicrobial therapy, and Schedule II controlled substance use. In accordance with CMS Conditions of Participation, all medication orders must be reviewed, renewed, changed, and/or discontinued within a “reasonable” time frame as approved by the Medical Staff. All medications not specifically identified in the automatic stop order policies or without a specified duration upon ordering should have an automatic stop order of 30 days. Although CMS does not define the time period for acute care hospitals, they have specified at least every 30 days in their Long Term Care regulations.

1. Clinical Suites will indicate to the prescriber which medication orders are about to expire, including those with automatic stop orders as outlined in Appendix A.

2. Exceptions to the medication specific stop orders may be made under the following conditions:
   a. The last effective order indicated an exact duration time for the medication therapy.
   b. The prescriber reorders the medication or treatment.

3. The prescribing practitioner must be notified before an antibiotic order is automatically stopped. If the order expires during an “off” shift, the prescriber should be notified during their next working shift. Never shall the medication or treatment be given for the maximum period stated above if a shorter period was indicated on the order by the prescriber.
4. Medications shall be discontinued whenever a patient undergoes one of the following procedures, and only those meds with new orders to continue afterwards will be resumed:
   a. Surgery
   b. Admission to or transfer out of an intensive care unit

5. When an order is received for a medication that is subject to an automatic stop, the pharmacy information system indicates this on the patient profile which assures that a process is in effect to have the information appear on the medication administration record in MAK and/or Clinical Suites.

6. Pharmacy personnel shall monitor each patient’s medication profile for those that warrant discontinuation.

7. The prescriber must specifically write an order or enter the order into an electronic ordering system to continue an automatically stopped medication. Medications should not be dispensed after the discontinuation time if proper prescriber notification has occurred.

8. It is the responsibility of the nursing staff to inform the prescriber of an expiring antibiotic medication order. This notification should be made before the expiration date, allowing the prescriber enough time to evaluate the further need for the medication. The pharmacy shall assist the nursing staff with the notification process as deemed appropriate.
# Appendix A

## Medication Categories with Automatic Stop Orders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medication Category</th>
<th>Maximum Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schedule II &amp; III Controlled Substances</td>
<td>5 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Meperidine</td>
<td>*48 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antibiotics</td>
<td>7 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anticoagulants</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Warfarin</td>
<td>1 day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Parenteral Nutrition</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Specific Agents**

- Ketorolac (injectable or oral)  
  - 3 days (for adults)  
  - 2 days (for pediatrics)

*Required stop times based on product information*