



## ICPS statement on pediatric patient weights in Kilograms

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Dosing complexities unique to pediatrics put children at high risk for serious consequences related to medication errors. Pediatric medication doses are usually weight-based and based specifically upon the patient's weight in **kilograms (kg)**. Weighing and documenting pediatric weights only in kilograms has been strongly recommended and supported in the literature as a strategy to decrease medication errors throughout the patient encounter. All ICPS Health-systems that treat pediatric patients have policies requiring weights in kg.

Despite these measures, there have been recent errors or near misses within ICPS Health-systems due to weights incorrectly obtained or documented. Examples include:

- Weight for drug dose calculation used from prior admission (1.5 kg difference)—med orders needed to be changed to reflect correct weight
- Documented weight was estimated - significantly less than actual weight
- Documented weight taken as pounds and recorded as kg—two fold weight error
- Estimated weight documented as 46.6kg (mom had stated patient weighs 46-48 pounds)
- Figures transposed (ex 2.53 documented as 5.23 kg)
- Decimal point error (weight off by factor of 10) (62 kg instead of 6.2 kg)

Errors in documented weight can lead to errors in: medication dosing, nutritional orders and supplementation, and assessment of overall clinical condition

### Recommendations:

- Policies should define the way in which a patient's weight is recorded, interpreted and utilized in all clinical systems.
- Weight must always be obtained, entered and displayed in clinical systems in metric units (KG or GM) only.
- Ensure scales measure in metric units and default to metric display only (KG or GM).
- Consider optimal conditions for weighing a patient:
  - same time of day
  - patients should be weighed minimally clothed
- Except in emergency situations, require that patient weight is documented before ordering or dispensing medications.
- Require pharmacists to independently double-check weight-based dosing calculations.
- Weight based doses should not exceed maximum dosing. Pharmacy to confirm.
- Educate staff about weight-based dosing errors and strategies to prevent them

**Contributors:**

David Zipes, MD FAAP, SFHM  
Director, St. Vincent Pediatric Hospitalists  
Peyton Manning Children's Hospital at St. Vincent  
[dgzipes@stvincent.org](mailto:dgzipes@stvincent.org)

Michele Saysana, MD, FAAP  
Medical Director, Riley Quality and Safety  
Associate Professor of Clinical Pediatrics  
Riley Hospital for Children at Indiana University Health  
Department of Pediatrics; IU School of Medicine  
[msaysana@IUHealth.org](mailto:msaysana@IUHealth.org)

Gina Ellis, Pharm.D.  
Neonatal and Pediatric Clinical Pharmacy Specialist  
Franciscan St. Francis Hospital  
[Gina.Ellis@franciscanalliance.org](mailto:Gina.Ellis@franciscanalliance.org)

Dennis Gardner, Pharm.D.  
Clinical Pharmacy Specialist  
Pediatrics/Neonatal Intensive Care  
Community Health Network  
[DGardner@ecomunity.com](mailto:DGardner@ecomunity.com)

Margie McCaskey, RN, DNP, CPHQ  
Formerly Chief Quality Coordinator  
Riley Hospital for Children at IU Health

Lorie J. Miller, CPHQ  
Quality Management Consultant  
Peyton Manning Children's Hospital at St. Vincent  
[ljmiller@stvincent.org](mailto:ljmiller@stvincent.org)

Millicent Moye M.D.  
Director, Adolescent Health  
Marion County Public Health Department  
Action Health Center  
[MMoye@MarionHealth.org](mailto:MMoye@MarionHealth.org)

Colleen Scherer, PharmD, MPA, BCPS  
Pediatric Clinical Pharmacist –  
Peyton Manning Children's Hospital at St. Vincent  
[cnschere@stvincent.org](mailto:cnschere@stvincent.org)

Nino Voskuhl, PharmD  
Pharmacy Operations Manager  
Riley Hospital for Children at Indiana University Health

[nvoskuhl@IUHealth.org](mailto:nvoskuhl@IUHealth.org)

Elizabeth Weinstein, MD, FAAEM, FACEP, FAAP  
Associate Professor of Clinical Pediatrics and Emergency Medicine  
Indiana University School of Medicine  
Riley Hospital for Children and Sidney & Lois Eskenazi Hospital  
Director, Indiana Emergency Medical Services for Children Program  
Deputy Medical Director, Pediatrics, Indianapolis EMS  
[elweinst@iupui.edu](mailto:elweinst@iupui.edu)