New Policy: Two-letter Stems

The USAN Council discussed coining nonproprietary names with two-letter stems at the USANC summer meeting in July 2017. The USAN Council decided that moving forward the new USAN policy will be not to coin nonproprietary names with two-letter stems. The Council based its decision on the likelihood of two-letter stems creating the potential for medication errors and the inconsistencies in accepting or rejecting proprietary names containing two-letter stems.

Why is Accurate and Updated CAS Information Necessary for My USAN Submission?

Whether you, as the applicant, are submitting USAN applications for a parent compound, salt or submitting a USAN Revised application, it is important to update your information with CAS. The USAN Program relies on this accuracy to allow for chemical review and subsequent publication of the adoption statement. CAS numbers provide a way to properly identify and reduce ambiguity. They were created to function as unique identifiers to help eliminate confusion caused by the use of synonyms applied to the same chemical. This is so important because a particular substance with a common name may have different chemical names and different CAS assignments. Again, updated information is very important with your USAN application. Sometimes there are cases of deleted or replaced registry numbers which can create confusion. It is possible that a different source of registration, such as a partnered company, duplicates registration of a CAS number for the same substance.

Remember the CAS Number for the Parent Species

If you apply for a USAN first, we will apply for an INN for the active species on your behalf. To do this, the USAN program must submit CAS registry information for the parent species, as well as for the salt or ester.
To avoid delays in processing, USAN Program staff recommends submitting CAS registry numbers for both the salt or ester and its parent when applying for a USAN. The International Nonproprietary Names (INN) Expert Committee, names only the active species and leaves naming the form of the substance to be marketed up to pharmaceutical commissions, regulatory bodies, and pharmaceutical manufacturers. Because the USAN Program names the form of the compound to be marketed, and the INN names only the active species, a USAN and an INN may not always be identical. To maintain consistency, you may wish to request a USANM for the parent compound, if you plan to market the salt or ester.

Quick USAN Application Tips

- If you are submitting a biologics application, please make sure to submit your amino acid sequences in an editable MS Word document. Email them to gail.karet@ama-assn.org or mary.haynes@ama-assn.org.
- If you are submitting a contact lens application, please let us know if anything has been added to the lens material to alter the properties.
- Include the investigator’s brochure in your application materials.
- It is the applicant’s responsibility to register Internet domain names; the cost is minimal.
- Remember your assigned negotiator and file number when emailing or calling.

Upcoming Events

- USAN Council Winter Meeting – January 18-19, 2018
- INN 66th Consultation Meeting – May 1-4, 2018
About USAN

The purpose of the United States Adopted Names (USAN) Council is to serve the health professions of the United States by selecting simple, informative and unique nonproprietary names for drugs by establishing logical nomenclature classifications based on pharmacological and/or chemical relationships.

The USAN Council is tri-sponsored by the American Medical Association (AMA), the United States Pharmacopeial Convention (USP) and the American Pharmacists Association (APhA). The USAN Council aims for global standardization and unification of drug nomenclature and related rules to ensure that drug information is communicated accurately and unambiguously. It works closely with the International Nonproprietary Name (INN) Program of the World Health Organization (WHO) and various national nomenclature groups.

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