Philosophy of USAN Program

Nonproprietary drug names in use today reflect both present nomenclature practices as well as older methods used to names drug entities. Early drug nomenclature was based on the chemical structure of the entity. As newer drugs became chemically more complex and numerous, nonproprietary names based on the compound’s chemistry became long and difficult to spell, pronounce, and remember. Furthermore, chemically-derived names provided little useful information for non-chemist health practitioners.

Today, nonproprietary nomenclature is coined so that names are useful and meaningful for their primary users, the health professionals. Physicians, for example, are interested in a drug’s pharmacological and therapeutic properties, not details of structural manipulation of molecules. Consideration of the needs of health professionals when dealing with drug nomenclature has led to a system in which distinctive nonproprietary names are given that indicate relationships that exist between the new entity and older drugs. Conversely, misleading names that might suggest non-existing relationships are avoided.

Obsolete Nomenclature Methods

A once useful method of naming drugs was the practice of condensing the full chemical name into a chemically oriented nonproprietary name. For example, amphetamine was assigned to the parent central stimulant and methamphetamine to its methyl analog.

Another source of confusion with chemically-derived names was the repetitive use of the same chemical prefixes for different drug series. This practice led to similar look-alike and sound-alike names for drugs that were not otherwise related. Chemically-derived nonproprietary names were useful when the chemistry of drugs was not too complex and there were relatively few drugs on the market.
Why are CAS Registry Numbers Important?

Worldwide, Chemical Abstracts Service (CAS) is regarded as a comprehensive source of chemical information. The CAS Chemical Registry System was introduced in 1965 and CAS Online was launched in 1980, initially used primarily by information specialists to search the database. Today the Registry contains more than 130 million organic and inorganic substances, with 67 million sequences. Each CAS registry number is a unique numeric identifier designating only one substance. The registry number is used throughout many fields spanning use in industry, education, scientific research, and commercial sales from chemical catalogs and online shopping. Federal regulations use CAS numbers heavily for identification purposes involving such things as importing and exporting, customs and merchandise, transportation, food additives, occupational safety and health standards, environmental pollutant codes, and substance identification in hazard evaluations. Registry numbers are often used to identify chemical substances in journal articles, handbooks, indexes, databases and inventories.

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.

Submitting Application Fees

Wondering what the USAN application fee is and how to send it? In order to begin to process the USAN applications application fees must be received. Required USAN application fees are as follows:

$23,000 for a single entity drug and salt form. This is typically known as a USAN and USAN Modified (see Form A);

$15,000 for only a single entity drug that does not have a salt form associated with it (see Form B);
$8,000 for a USAN Modified. This could be, for example, the addition of a hydrochloride salt if there is only a USAN for the parent, or it could be because at some point in the past an application was processed for the salt form and now you need to submit an application for a USAN for the parent (see Form C);

$5,000 for a USAN Revised. Typically this is for if you need to change the chemical, or any other items, on the statement information (besides the actual name) that has been published on the adoption statement, or you’ve applied for an IND to change the indication, the sponsor has changed hands, etc. (see Form D);

$15,000 for new contact lens material (see Form E); $8,000 for a modified and/or revised contact lens application;

$15,000 for a new Monoclonal Antibody, Gene Therapies, Cellular and Non-Cellular Therapies (see Form F); $8,000 for a modified application.

When processing the payment we realize that many companies must go through multiple departments. Please remember to include a reference to the compound you are submitting on the check stub to lessen any confusion on what the payment is for. The check for the USAN application fee must be made out to the American Medical Association/USAN. If you are sending a check, it should be sent to the following address:

Attn: Remittance  
330 N. Wabash  
Suite 39300  
Chicago, IL 60611

Credit card payments are not available; however, an electronic fund transfer is possible. Please contact mary.haynes@ama-assn.org to inquire about an electronic fund transfer, or any other specific payment questions.

**Upcoming Events**

- USAN Council Summer Meeting – July 13-14, 2017
- INN 65th Consultation Meeting – October 17-20, 2017
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.

Edited by brad.wells@ama-assn.org