

## Stylebook

In general, follow AP style in marketing, internal and news media communications. If not listed there, follow Webster's latest dictionary for answers to spelling and word usage; refer to *Stedman's Medical Dictionary* for medical terminology. What follows is Prisma Health-specific style for select items and frequently used but troublesome nomenclature not noted as AP style.

### A

**About:** Use instead of *approximately*, *around*, *roughly*.

**Abbreviations/acronyms/initialisms:** Spell out the full word in text and then follow with the shortened form in parentheses: **body mass index (BMI)**.

Subsequent uses can be this shortened form. Limit use to avoid alphabet soup. Some well-known items can go directly to the shortened form: **MRI, ECG, CT** (see AP).

**Academic degrees:** Do not use periods: **Jay Smith, MD, PhD, DO, MPH, EdD**, etc. Include the degree abbreviation with a person's name on first reference. The second reference will use Dr. (as appropriate) followed by last name. Subsequent references are last name only. **Robert Fox, PhD > Dr. Fox > Fox**.

**Academic health center** (not academic medical center)

**Accent marks:** Use is acceptable.

**Accessible parking** (not handicapped)

**Acronyms, initialisms:** In general, no periods needed.

**Active voice:** Use when possible, especially in headlines with a verb.

**Addresses:** Use these abbreviations: Ave., Blvd., St., Ln., Ter., Dr., Rd., Cir., Hwy., with a numbered address: **7 S. Main Rd.** Spell out addresses and capitalize with no number: **The school is on South Main Road.** Lowercase and spell out when used with more than one address name: **Hawk and Raven streets.** Use numerals in address numbers. Directional modifiers have no space or periods: SE, NW.

**Advanced practice provider:** When needed for medical audiences, use instead of "physician extender" or "mid-level provider." Avoid for general public.

**Affiliate:** Lowercase. Limit use to when needed to differentiate between the Midlands and the Upstate. **Prisma Health–Midlands is an affiliate of Prisma Health.** When listing both affiliates, start with Midlands for proper alphabetical order.

**AFib:** One word with two capitals. OK after initial parenthetical reference for "atrial fibrillation."

**African American:** Capitalize but do not hyphenate. Do not capitalize *black* or *white* to denote race. (*Caucasian* is capitalized.)

**Ages:** Never use *aged*. For multiple ages: **This program is for people age 21 and older; this program is for people ages 40-60.**

**Although/while:** *While* implies a time element. **While pedaling, I became dizzy.**

**a.m.:** Lowercase. Insert a space after the numeral. Use *midnight* instead of 12 a.m.

**And/or:** Avoid. Use *XX or YY*, or use *both*.

**Area code:** Note with a hyphen. Special internal communications might exclude it.

**As well as:** Do not use if *and* or *also* is in the sentence. It is not a synonym.

**Asterisk:** No space after an asterisk. Be sure the asterisk appears first in regular body text, not just at the bottom of a page by itself.

**Attribution:** Use "said." No need to use other attributive words such as "stated," "noted," "explained," etc.

**Automated external defibrillator** (not *automatic*): AED thereafter after initial parenthetical reference.

## **B**

**Baby-Friendly:** Note hyphen and capital *F* with regard to Baby-Friendly designation.

**Behavior Essentials:** Note capitals. We have 12; all were designed with our purpose as a guide (four for each sentence in our purpose.) They are a common set of behaviors for all team members with threads of communication, teamwork, mutual respect, hospitality and accountability.

### *Inspire health.*

- Support the wellness and well-being of others and myself.
- Be curious, learn continuously and strive to be my best.
- Encourage and build teamwork.
- Embrace change and grow.

### *Serve with compassion.*

- Make sure each person feels visible, valued and respected.
- Create a welcoming and safe environment.
- Communicate clearly, kindly and thoughtfully.
- Live in gratitude and express appreciation.

### *Be the difference.*

- Show up every day with a positive, will-do attitude.
- Take ownership and be accountable.
- Do the right thing – be honest and trustworthy.
- Exceed expectations for each person, in every moment.

**Between XX and YY, from XX to YY:** Both are OK, but “between XX to XXX” is incorrect.

**Board of directors:** Lowercase unless used as part of a formal title. Use of *board* alone is always lowercase: ***Prisma Health Board of Directors > the board.***

**Board-certified (adjective), board certified (noun)**

**Boilerplate:** Prisma Health, a not-for-profit health company, is committed to excellence in patient care, clinical research and teaching the next generation of medical professionals. Our organization – South Carolina’s largest private employer – was formed when Greenville Health System and Palmetto Health joined together in late 2017, officially becoming Prisma Health in January 2019. With 32,000 team members (including volunteers), 18 hospitals and over 300 physician practice sites, we serve more than 1.2 million patients annually – about a quarter of the state’s population. Our goal is to improve the health of all South Carolinians by enhancing clinical quality, the patient experience and access to affordable care. Our cardiovascular, neuroscience, OB/GYN, oncology and orthopedic programs attract patients throughout the region. Also noteworthy are our two renowned children’s hospitals, comprehensive diabetes care and extensive primary care network. Ultimately, we are dedicated to transforming the health care experience for our patients and families, our team members and guests by bringing our purpose to life: *Inspire health. Serve with compassion. Be the difference.* Learn more at [PrismaHealth.org](http://PrismaHealth.org).

**Buddy the Bear** (not Buddy Bear)

**Bullet points:** Bullet points should be brief (no longer than a few lines). Introduce the bulleted list by using a colon (does not need to be a full sentence): ***Our partners are:*** or ***These are our partners:*** or ***Our partners:*** are examples. Start all bullets with a capital letter preceded by a space. When bulleted items are a short

list, no punctuation is needed at the end of any item. If the bulleted item constitutes a sentence or near sentence, place a period at the end of each item. Do not add *and* before the last item.

## C

**Campus names (8) in the Upstate** (drop *Prisma Health* after initial reference).

Note: The Midlands does not have campus names.

Prisma Health Easley Medical Campus  
Prisma Health Greenville Memorial Medical Campus  
Prisma Health Greer Medical Campus  
Prisma Health Laurens County Medical Campus  
Prisma Health North Greenville Medical Campus  
Prisma Health Oconee Medical Campus  
Prisma Health Patewood Medical Campus  
Prisma Health Simpsonville Medical Campus

**Capitalization:** When used as a specific designation, with or without numerals, capitalize Table, Figures, etc.: ***As shown in the Table; as illustrated in Figures 2 and 7.*** Capitalize the full, formal names of departments and divisions (Department of Pediatrics), but not the unofficial name (Pediatrics department). Exception: Emergency Department. Note that calling a unit just by its discipline can be capitalized on second reference to distinguish it from the discipline in general. Capitalize major words and italicize book names, booklets, plays, magazine names, movies, TV and radio shows, journals and conference titles.

**Caption/cutline:** Use periods when it is a complete or nearly complete sentence.

**Car seat**

**Caregiver** (one word)

**Care team:** Use to denote a group of clinical providers or your medical team.

**Catheterization**

**cesarean:** Lowercase. *C-section* thereafter with no previous parenthetical reference.

**Contractions:** Limit contractions when writing is informal and conversational. Academic articles, brochures or programs for formal events (and other pieces that need to communicate seriousness and formality) should use contractions sparingly.

**Colon:** Capitalize the first letter after a colon in a title. Ditto in body copy for when what follows the colon is a complete sentence.

**Copayment, copay, coinsurance:** One word, no hyphen.

**Co-worker:** Avoid. Use "team member" or "teammate."

**CT scan:** Do not use CAT scan. No need to write out what CT stands for.

**Cutting edge:** Avoid; use "advanced."

## D

**Dash:** Denotes an abrupt change in thought or emphatic pause. Also used when a phrase that otherwise would be set off by commas contains a series of words that must be separated by commas. Use an en dash with a space on either side. Compare with "en dash" below.

**Dates:** Use the form May 14, 2019, or Nov. 31. Abbreviate Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov. and Dec. only when a specific date is used. When a year is used by itself, write out the month: ***August 2025.*** When used in a sentence with a year, a comma follows the year: ***The deadline was Thursday, May 30, 2018, for the grant.*** Add the year only when it will add clarity or for key deadlines. Adding the day with the date for imminent classes or events should suffice for clarity (no year).

**Days:** Spell out the day of the week. The day precedes the date: **Monday, April 1.** Write out the day in full with a specific date, but you can abbreviate a long month: **Tuesday, Dec. 3.** Use the day/date combination on first reference in most cases. Note again if needed for clarity.

**Decade:** Not any 10-year period, but a period of 10 years starting with a year in which the last digit is zero: **the decade of the 1980s.**

**Degree symbol:** Do not use with temperature readings: **50 F** (note space). Exception is with academic audiences when degree symbol can be used.

**Department and division names:** Capitalize names when referring to the formal name or a specific department or division. See "capitalization." When used in a general or unofficial sense, do not capitalize. Exception: Emergency Department. The same holds for offices, associations and other official bodies. When listing more than one entity, the collective noun should be lowercase: **divisions of Geriatrics and Dermatology.**

**Designed to** (avoid)

**Diabetes, type 1 or type 2:** Note lowercase *t* and Arabic numeral. Never use *diabetics*, but write "people with diabetes." Do not identify people by their disease.

**Die of** (not "from")

**Different from** (not "than")

**DigiPath**

**Doctors' Day, National:** Note apostrophe.

**Due to:** Avoid except if referring to money.

## E

**ECG:** Use instead of EKG. Both mean electrocardiogram, but no need to write out.

**E. coli:** Acceptable in all references for *Escherichia coli* O157:H7 bacteria. Italicize.

**e.g., i.e.:** Both are lowercase and followed by a comma. However, avoid except with sophisticated readers as many folks use the terms interchangeably: the former means "for example" or "such as"; the latter means "that is" and indicates an explanation will follow.

**Ellipsis** (three dots with a space on either side): Try to avoid for general audiences.

**Email addresses:** Capitalize for reading ease: **Sam.Mann@PrismaHealth.org.**

**Employee:** Avoid. Use "team member" or "teammate."

**Em dash** (avoid)

**Emergency Department:** Capitalize even if not the official name.

**En dash:** Use between words to indicate duration or to replace the word "to": **3–5 years old, 9–11 a.m., 8 a.m.–1 p.m., Monday–Thursday, Oct.–Dec. 2019.** It is also used for ranges of quantity and measurement. No spaces appear on either side of an en dash in such usage. Compare with "dash." Another usage with no spaces is with our practice, department and affiliate names: **Pediatric Associates–Greer, Department of Surgery–Division of Endocrine Surgery, Prisma Health–University Medical Group, Prisma Health–Upstate.**

**Endnotes:** Use if needed, but avoid footnotes.

**Enterprise:** Use "organization" instead when referring to Prisma Health.

**et al.** (do not use until at least three authors are listed).

**etc.** (avoid if possible).

**Evidence-based medicine** (not "evidenced")

## F

**Fellowship-trained (adjective), fellowship trained (noun)**

**Fiscal year:** Use just one year when referring to a fiscal year: ***This fiscal year (FY) is 2019.*** After the parenthetical reference, you may shorten it to FY19 (no space or apostrophe).

**First-come, first-served**

**Flyer** (not "flier")

**Flotation** (not "floatation")

**Free from** (not "of")

## G

**Gallbladder**

**Gastrointestinal:** One word. Second reference is *GI*. No need to reference parenthetically first.

**Goodnight Greenville** is a copyrighted children's book produced by Prisma Health-Upstate. Note two words and no comma.

**Guest** (not "visitor")

## H

**He or she:** Not "he/she" or "s/he." For transgender individuals or those not identifying with he or she, "they" is acceptable for both singular and plural.

**Health care:** Always two words, no hyphen, unless part of an official name.

**Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA):** Spell out on first reference with the acronym in parentheses; use acronym on second reference. Often misstated as HIPPA.

**Headings/headlines:** Internally and externally, use sentence case, NOT title case:

***Prisma Health–Midlands hosts open house.*** Include a verb and write in the active voice. No periods appear in header abbreviations (see "US" below). Only capitalize the first word and proper nouns, plus the first letter after a colon (exception is if official titles are included of books, conferences, etc.). Only the first part of a hyphenated word is capitalized: ***Well-qualified US nurses seek salary increase*** is an example. Use periods in headlines if they are complete sentences.

**Held:** OK to use with time and site.

**Helpline, hotline**

**Hospital names for Prisma Health:** Drop *Prisma Health* after initial reference.

**Prisma Health–Midlands (7)**

Prisma Health Baptist Hospital  
Prisma Health Baptist Parkridge Hospital  
Prisma Health Children's Hospital–Midlands  
Prisma Health Heart Hospital  
Prisma Health Richland Hospital  
Prisma Health Richland Springs Hospital  
Prisma Health Tuomey Hospital

**Prisma Health–Upstate (11)**

Prisma Health Baptist Easley Hospital  
Prisma Health Children's Hospital–Upstate  
Prisma Health Greenville Memorial Hospital  
Prisma Health Greer Memorial Hospital  
Prisma Health Hillcrest Hospital  
Prisma Health Laurens County Hospital  
Prisma Health Marshall I. Pickens Hospital  
Prisma Health North Greenville Hospital

Prisma Health Oconee Memorial Hospital  
Prisma Health Patewood Hospital  
Prisma Health Roger C. Peace Rehabilitation Hospital

**Hyphen:** Use to connect two or more words as one idea, not to denote ranges. In headlines, the immediate letter following a hyphen is not capitalized: ***Well-being deemed key to a long life.***

## I

### **Ignaz Semmelweis**

**Impact:** The word as a verb does not mean “affect” or “influence.” It means “to strike forcefully.”

**In order to** (avoid)

**Innovative:** Avoid overuse.

## J

**The Joint Commission:** No longer JCAHO (Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations). “The” is part of the name. Not TJC or JC.

## L

**Latin terms:** Italicize with disease entities such as *E. coli*.

**Lead, led:** *Lead* is present tense. *Led* is past tense. You lead a discussion. After it has occurred, you led the discussion.

**Leader, leadership:** *Leadership* can be singular or plural. At present, this term makes up the HR categories of managers and above (supervisors are not included). Avoid using “management,” “employees,” “supervisors” and “staff.” Instead, use “leaders,” “leadership” and “team members.”

**Level I Trauma Center:** Use Roman numeral and all initial capitals to designate this top level.

**Level IV NICU:** Use Roman numeral. With NICUs, IV is the top level (a relatively new designation). Both the Midlands and Upstate have Level III designation.

## M

**Magnet®:** ® is needed on first reference. Be aware that Magnet has specific wording it requires organizations to use.

**Measurements:** In text and complete sentences (or nearly complete sentences), write out the measurement word. This style is also preferred in recipe ingredient lists and instructions.

In tables, abbreviations are acceptable for all measurement terms except “cup/s.” Use abbreviations consistently for every measurement in the table. Do NOT use periods on any measurement abbreviations. Most frequent items seen are oz, fl oz, tsp, tbsp, g, mcg, mg. Separate the numeral and abbreviation with a space (10 g).

For a range of measure, frequency or time, use an en dash with no spaces around it (10–12 grams, 1–2 tbsp, 3–4 times per day).

**Medicine-Pediatrics:** Note hyphen. Internal Medicine-Pediatrics is also OK. Med-Peds thereafter; no initial parenthetical reference needed.

**Midlands:** Always capitalize.

**Midnight** (not 12 midnight or 12 a.m.)

**Multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary:** *Multidisciplinary* refers to the combining of many disciplines or branches of learning or research; *interdisciplinary* refers to the involving or joining of two disciplines or branches of learning or research.

## N

**Nauseated, nauseous:** A person is nauseated, not nauseous. *Nauseous* means causing nausea.

**Neonatal, neonatology, neonatologist**

**Neurological** (not neurologic)

**Noninvasive:** One word, no hyphen.

**Noon:** Not 12 noon or 12 p.m. Protocol when times are listed separately (not within a sentence): Noon–3 p.m., but 10 a.m.–noon.

**Not-for-profit** (not nonprofit or non-profit)

**Numerals:** When ordinal numbers must be used, do not superscript them: **15th annual Community Health Summit**. In a list: **1.**, not “1)” or “(1).”

**Nurse-Family Partnership**

**Nurse-midwife**

**Nurse practitioner:** Note spelling of second word.

**Nurses Week, National** (no apostrophe)

## O

**OB/GYN:** Exception is Greenville Ob/Gyn Associates.

**Ophthalmology**

**Organization:** Use to describe Prisma Health. Also “health company.”

**Organizationwide:** Word is very long, so avoid if possible.

**Orthopaedic (Upstate), orthopedic (Midlands)**

**Over:** Acceptable in all uses when the meaning is “more than.”

## P

**Palliative**

**Palmetto Health–USC Medical Group:** The name will eventually change to Prisma Health–USC Medical Group.

**Patient-Centered Medical Home** is the official designation appearance.

**Pavilion**

**Payor** (not “payer” per AP)

**Physician:** Preferred to “doctor,” except among audiences with low literacy.

**Physician assistant** (not physician’s)

**p.m.:** Lowercase. Insert a space after the numeral. Use *noon* instead of 12 p.m.

**Polycystic ovary syndrome** (not “ovarian”). PCOS thereafter after initial parenthetical reference.

**PowerPoint**

**Pre-assessment**

**Preadmission, preregistration, preoperative, perioperative, postoperative**

**Prisma Health:** Do not use all capitals. Do not abbreviate as PH. Do not use Prisma by itself. Add superscript ® after the initial reference only when the logo is not nearby (® should be approved by May 2019).

**Prisma Health Downtown** is the name of the building in Greenville (no Upstate).

**Prisma Health Midlands Network** (formerly Palmetto Health Quality Collaborative)

**Prisma Health purpose:** Do not use “statement”; do not capitalize *purpose*; do not substitute with “pledge” or “promise.”

Follow these examples of how to write about our purpose:

- Our purpose: *Inspire health. Serve with compassion. Be the difference.*
- Everyone at Prisma Health is dedicated to bringing our purpose to life: *Inspire health. Serve with compassion. Be the difference.*

In regular body copy, italicize the three sentences (or portion thereof on the rare occasion when one aspect is being emphasized, such as with Behavior Essentials). Only capitalize the first word of each sentence. Do not combine the sentences. The sentences might not be italicized outside of body copy in special cases, such as pocket folders or plaques.

**Prisma Health–University Medical Group:** Use GHS University Medical Group or GHS Partners in Health, Inc., until July 1, 2019.

**Prisma Health Upstate Network** (formerly MyHealth First Network)

**Progressive:** Avoid overuse.

**Prosthetist**

## R

**Raffle:** Do not use; write “giveaway” or “door prize” instead.

**Readability level:** Strive for fifth grade for patient education and the general public.

**Regard to, with** (not “regards”)

**Rev.:** Does not stand for a noun; use “the Rev.” on initial reference.

**Rheumatologist**

## S

**Second person:** Although it shouldn’t be overused, “you” is a good way to create immediacy for the reader. Ditto for the understood “you.” Do not mix the second and third person in a single communication.

**Semicolon:** Use sparingly as many folks do not know what this mark means or how to use it. Ditto for ellipsis.

**Slash:** Do not insert a space on either side of a slash.

**Spacing:** Only a single space follows the end of a sentence. Ditto for a colon. Ditto before a ZIP code.

**Speak with, talk to**

**Specialty** (not “speciality”)

**Staff** (avoid)

**stage I, II, III, IV:** Note lowercase s and Roman numeral.

**State of the art** (avoid)

**Subject-verb agreement:** Pay special attention to a company, board or council.

Such entities require “it”: ***The Board of Directors voted against the surcharge, saying it did not want to burden the public.***

**Such as/like:** If the list or example that follows includes the item that starts it, use *such as*: ***Company X hasn’t had problems interacting with vendors such as Fanny Packs R Us.*** However, with a strict comparison or metaphor, use *like*:

***Company X may have an issue if it hires a vendor like Jet Packs R Us, which relies on organized labor.*** (Because the latter is a theoretical example – Jet Packs R Us is being used to stand for any vendor – *like* is correct.)

**Suite number:** Appears after the street address. Can abbreviate as Ste. as needed. A comma precedes it.

**Superscript:** Use only when a trademark of some kind must be used. Do not use with ordinal numbers.

**Supposed to** (not “suppose”)

**Symbols:** Use only as needed. Avoid "<, >" to mean "more and less than." Insert a space on either side when symbols are used: **5 + 3 = 8**.

**System:** Avoid. Use "organization" or "health company" when referring to Prisma Health. Avoid "enterprise," too.

## T

### **Telehealth, telemedicine**

**Telephone numbers:** Include the area code with the phone number except when the audience is internal; in those cases, use XXX-XXXX. Do not include "1-" before area codes unless it is a toll-free number. Do not use parentheses around area codes — use a hyphen between groups of numbers. Do not use periods between groups of numbers. **For extensions: 864-455-7000, ext. 2. For toll-free numbers: 1-800-111-1000. For words: 803-296-CARE (2273).**

**Temperature:** 86 F (note space before F and no degree sign). Temperatures get higher or lower, not warmer or cooler.

**3D:** Not "3-D"; *3D* can start a sentence.

**Timelines:** When referencing historical items, use the name of the organization at that time or write "what is now Prisma Health." Options, depending on the emphasis needed on the organization or affiliate name: ***Kacey Eichelberger, MD, joined what is now Prisma Health in 2013; Kacey Eichelberger, MD, joined Greenville Health System (now Prisma Health–Upstate) in 2013; Kacey Eichelberger, MD, joined the organization in 2013.*** (She did not join Prisma Health in 2013 as it didn't exist at that time.)

**Toll-free** (hyphenate in all cases): Exchanges are 800, 888, 877, 866, 855, 844. Precede with "1-" for clarity of toll-free status.

**Trademarks:** Superscript when needed on first use only: <sup>™</sup>, <sup>®</sup>;<sup>SM</sup>; legally, we need only note with Prisma Health entities or when required by a partnership agreement (Magnet<sup>®</sup> is an example). In general, we do not include a trademark reference with products outside of Prisma Health: ***da Vinci Surgical System*** (note capitals but no trademark). Use a generic equivalent when possible: ***tissue, not Kleenex.***

**Transform:** Avoid overuse.

### **Tuomey (Midlands), Toomey (Upstate)**

**type 1, type 2:** Note lowercase *t* and Arabic numeral.

## U

**Under:** Acceptable in all uses when the meaning is "less than."

**University of South Carolina School of Medicine Columbia:** Note this just-announced nomenclature. No hyphen; never shorten as USCSOMG. You can shorten as UofSC School of Medicine Columbia after initial parenthetical reference to UofSC, but try to avoid it. And yes, that's now correct.

**University of South Carolina School of Medicine Greenville:** No hyphen; never shorten as USCSOMG. You can shorten as UofSC School of Medicine Greenville after initial parenthetical reference to UofSC, but try to avoid it. And yes, that's now correct.

**Up to date** (avoid)

**Upstate:** Always capitalize. Ditto for Midlands.

## V

**Via** (avoid)

**Visitor:** Use "guest" instead.

## **W**

**Web address:** Use a period when a sentence ends with a web address.

**Whether:** "Or not" is not needed after the word.

**Would have:** Not "would of," "could of," "should of."

**Workforce**

**Workout (noun), work out (verb)**

**Work-up**

**www:** No need to add before URLs internally within Prisma Health.

## **Y**

**Years:** Can abbreviate as '94, '90s (as in decade of the 1990s) informally.

## **Z**

**ZIP code:** Use one space between the state name and code: Greenville, SC 29601.

ZIP is always capitalized as it stands for Zone Improvement Plan.