

## Billing Unit Standard Short Overview

In the practice of pharmacy today, smart computer systems bill pharmacy transactions. On the payer side of pharmacy billings, a computer receives transactions and determines the proper reimbursement. To ensure that both pharmacy and payer are satisfied, both computers must know how much product the pharmacy is billing. Without a commonly understood, standard method to communicate this quantity, billing and payment errors would occur.

For example, when a pharmacy dispenses one tube of a 60gm ointment, how should a computer represent that quantity? Is the pharmacy dispensing “one tube” or “60gm”? To answer this question and many others like it, the National Council of Prescription Drug Programs (NCPDP) developed and maintains the Billing Unit Standard (BUS) – the “billing quantity language” for pharmacy transactions. The guiding principle behind the BUS is that the quantity for every drug product can be described as a number of “eaches” or “grams” or “milliliters”.

What products are billed as a number of “eaches”?

Products that are measured in discrete units and not measured by volume or weight are billed as the number of “eaches” dispensed e.g. tablets and capsules.

What products are billed as a number of “grams”?

Products that are measured by weight are billed as the number of “grams” dispensed e.g. ointments and creams.

What products are billed as a number of “milliliters”?

Products that are measured by volume are billed as the number of “milliliters” dispensed e.g. solutions and injectable liquids.

Of course, a thorough understanding of the BUS can only be achieved by carefully reading the entire document. In it you will find detailed explanations of rules and terminology, practical applications of the standard to specific product types and answers to frequently asked questions. Billing Unit Standard is available by contacting NCPDP ([www.ncdp.org](http://www.ncdp.org)).