



American Hospital
Association®

Quality Advisory

October 25, 2017

SMALL-VOLUME PARENTERAL MEDICATION SHORTAGES: STRATEGIES FOR CONSERVATION

AT A GLANCE

At Issue:

In recent months, hospitals and health systems have experienced shortages of intravenous (IV) fluids that are critical to patient care. These national shortages were triggered by several factors, including continued pharmaceutical market consolidation and production interruptions at some manufacturing facilities due to serious quality issues. These shortages have worsened dramatically as a result of Hurricane Maria's impact on manufacturing plants in Puerto Rico. The most significant and severe shortage is for small-volume parenteral solutions, such as the 50 and 100 milliliter "minibags" of sodium chloride 0.9%, dextrose 5% and IV nutritional products made by Baxter.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is working with Baxter and other drug companies to reduce the impact of these shortages and to restore operations of Baxter facilities in Puerto Rico. Most recently, [FDA](#) has permitted Baxter to import supplies of these products from their plants in [Ireland](#), [Australia](#), [Mexico](#) and [Canada](#). However, the imported supplies are not expected to fully address existing shortages of these products. These shortages are not expected to be resolved for several months.

The American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP) in collaboration with the University of Utah Drug Information Service (UUDIS), has compiled a document, "[Small-Volume Parenteral Solutions Shortages, Suggestions for Management and Conservation](#)," to assist hospitals and health systems seeking ways to manage these shortages by conserving existing supplies of these IV fluids.

Our Take:

The AHA believes that worsening shortages of these widely used critical products is quickly becoming a crisis and looming threat to public health. More must be done to resolve current shortages and to secure the supply of these and other life-saving products moving forward. **We are working, together with other national health care organizations, to urge FDA and pharmaceutical manufacturers to identify and implement all steps to expedite resolution of the worsening shortages and will keep you informed as those efforts progress.** In the meantime, the AHA believes that ASHP-UUDIS fact sheet offers practical strategies that hospitals and health systems might consider adopting during the current shortages. Hospitals, health systems and health care professionals should use their professional judgment in deciding how to use the information in this document, taking into account the needs and resources of their individual organizations.

What You Can Do:

Share the attached document with your pharmacy, medical and nursing leadership, materials managers and others in your organization who are involved in addressing the current shortages. We also encourage hospitals to periodically check the [FDA drug shortage website](#) for updated information regarding these shortages, including expected duration and available alternatives. For additional information, hospitals also can contact the manufacturers of these products directly.

Further Questions:

If you have questions about this advisory or the attached information, please contact Roslyne Schulman, director of policy, at rschulman@aha.org.