

INFORMATION AND RESOURCES FOR PHARMACIES CONCERNING IV FLUID SHORTAGES ATTRIBUTABLE TO HURRICANE MARIA

As pharmacists know, when Hurricane Maria struck Puerto Rico last September, the island's power infrastructure was severely damaged. Among the businesses affected were two of the few IV fluid manufacturers for the United States market (Kitifield and Baxter). As of January 4th, electrical power had been restored to only slightly more than half the island.

As a result, some hospitals have experienced IV fluid shortages (sometimes severe), as well as erratic supply of IV fluids from wholesalers. Hospitals are, of course, implementing a number of strategies to reduce consumption of IV fluids such as: administering medications through IV push where possible and injecting medications into an existing IV line rather than hanging a separate bag.

Baxter has announced that power has been restored to its facilities, but cautioned that the demand for IV fluids outstrips its current production capacity.

FDA is working with other companies to shore up supply lines. For example, FDA is working with ICU Medical, a firm that previously manufactured IV amino acid formulations for adult and pediatric patients, to facilitate its return to this market to help mitigate the shortage. FDA has also announced that is working with other companies, such as Fresenius Kabi and Laboratories Grifols, on efforts to increase supply of IV saline fluids.

Notwithstanding, it is likely that IV fluid shortages will continue for some time. Below are some references and resources that pharmacies may find helpful as they deal with these shortages.

FDA's list of IV fluid shortages, statements of current availability, and statements of anticipated duration of shortage:

https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/drugshortages/dsp_ActiveIngredientDetails.cfm?AI=Sodium%20Chloride%200.9per%20Injection%20Bags&st=c

FDA encourages hospitals to consider clinical recommendations from ASHP and the University of Utah for managing IV shortages:

<https://www.ashp.org/Drug-Shortages/Shortage-Resources/Publications/Small-Volume-Parenteral-Solutions-Shortages>

Board staff thanks Nidhi Gandhi, a PY-4 student at Wingate University, for assembling this resource document.

References:

- 1) <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/jan/10/hurricane-maria-puerto-rico-iv-bag-shortage-hospitals>
- 2) <https://www.fda.gov/NewsEvents/Newsroom/PressAnnouncements/ucm591391.htm>
- 3) <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/flu-season-straining-resources-iv-bag-shortage-hurricane-maria-puerto-rico/>
- 4) <https://www.wsj.com/articles/hospitals-wrestle-with-shortage-of-iv-bags-linked-to-hurricane-1515349271>