



June 21, 2018

The Honorable Christopher S. Murphy
136 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Murphy,

ASHP (the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists) applauds your leadership on a recent letter to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) urging the agency to create a Drug Shortages Task Force. As you may be aware, ASHP continues to track drug shortages on our website and regularly collaborates with FDA's drug shortages program. Over the last 20 years, ASHP has been a leader in addressing drug shortages and has led several in person stakeholder meetings, the most recent in November 2017. These in person meetings have resulted in a number of recommendations for policy makers and stakeholders alike. Many of the provisions in the Food and Drug Safety and Innovation Act stemmed from our 2010 shortage summit that ASHP led with its partners. The full report from our November 2017 Drug Shortages Roundtable [is available](#).

ASHP represents pharmacists who serve as patient care providers in acute and ambulatory settings. The organization's 45,000 members include pharmacists, student pharmacists, and pharmacy technicians. For more than 75 years, ASHP has been at the forefront of efforts to improve medication use and enhance patient safety.

As your letter noted, the Food and Drug Safety and Innovation Act enacted in 2012 called for the creation of a Drug Shortages Task Force within FDA to work with Congress and external stakeholders to explore solutions to this problem. ASHP is fully supportive of the creation of such a task force and is committed to finding solutions to this problem. In addition, we believe that ASHP can serve as a valuable resource to the Drug Shortages Task Force.

Drug shortages are a significant concern for our members as they struggle to obtain supplies of medications, some of which are essential to maintain basic levels of patient care. Many ASHP members are reporting that they must spend considerable time locating supplies of medications, which not only jeopardizes patient care, but also requires significant staff time, resulting in both financial and human-resource challenges. Over the previous year, shortages of critical IV solutions such as saline and opioid injectable medications have placed unsustainable burdens on clinicians who must scramble to obtain these products. In some cases, there is no alternative therapy that can be used. ASHP is deeply concerned that further or worsening shortages could result in a public health crisis.

Again, ASHP applauds your leadership in finding solutions to this public health problem. We look forward to working with you as well as FDA's drug shortages program to prevent and mitigate the impact of drug shortages.

Sincerely,

Kasey K. Thompson, Pharm.D., M.S., M.B.A.
Chief Operating Officer and Senior Vice President