

UNIVERSITY HEALTH CARE
HOSPITALS AND CLINICS

POLICY MANUAL

DRUG SHORTAGE

Review Date: 04/21/10 Revision Date: 04/21/10 Chapter: Medication Management

I. PURPOSE:

- A. When the pharmacy department is unable to obtain drug product through legal channels, patient therapy may be compromised. This policy describes the process for evaluating drug shortages, managing scarce resources, and minimizing impact on patient care.

II. DEFINITIONS:

- A. Drug shortage – a supply issue that affects how the pharmacy department prepares or dispenses a product or influences patient care when prescribers must choose an alternative therapy because of supply problems.

III. POLICY:

- A. The Drug Information Service (DIS), under the auspices of the Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee, is responsible for investigating and providing information about potential drug shortages that may affect patients at University Hospital and Clinics. The Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee approves any plans for restricting use or rationing limited supplies.

IV. PROCEDURE:

- A. Identifying drug shortages: Staff who identify a real or potential drug shortage should contact the DIS (drug.info@hsc.utah.edu, 581-2073). The DIS routinely screens for shortages through national databases and the pharmacy group purchasing organization.
- B. The DIS staff will investigate potential drug shortages by contacting all manufacturers of the product to determine current availability. The DIS staff will provide the availability information to the department purchasing and inventory control agents.
- C. The purchasing and inventory control agents will work through legal channels such as the drug wholesaler or the manufacturer to purchase supplies of the drug product.

- D. The purchasing and inventory control agents will work with the DIS to identify available inventory and usual use patterns and will inform the DIS if they are able to purchase additional supplies of the drug.
- E. If the supply situation meets the definition of a drug shortage, the DIS will develop a management strategy in cooperation with the clinicians most affected by the shortage.
- F. The Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee will approve decisions to ration or restrict product to a specific patient populations.
- G. The DIS will notify Pharmacy Department personnel, the Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee, and affected clinicians about drug shortages via e-mail, Intercomm, and web site (<http://intranet.uuhsc.utah.edu/pharmacy/shortages/>). The information provided will include when applicable:
 - 1. Products affected
 - 2. Reason for the shortage
 - 3. Estimated date of product availability
 - 4. Rationing or restriction strategies
 - 5. Specific management strategies such as removing product from automated dispensing cabinets (Omnicells) and centralizing distribution, or drawing up doses in the IV Center to conserve product.
 - 6. Recommendations for alternative agents if appropriate.
- H. The DIS will monitor the status of the drug shortage in cooperation with purchasing and inventory control agents until the supply situation no longer meets the definition of drug shortage. The DIS will provide information about the resolution of a drug shortage via e-mail and web site (<http://intranet.uuhsc.utah.edu/pharmacy/shortages/>).

REFERENCE:

- 1. Fox ER, Tyler LS. Managing drug shortages: Seven years' experience at one health system. *Am J Health-Syst Pharm.* 2003;60:245-253.
- 2. American Society of Health-System Pharmacists. ASHP Guidelines on Managing Drug Product Shortages in Hospitals and Health Systems. *American Journal of Health-System Pharmacists.* 2009;66:1399-1406.

APPROVAL BODY: Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee
APPROVAL DATE: 05/03/10
POLICY OWNER: Manager, Drug Information Service

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

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(For previous historical information, please see P&T Committee minutes.)