



Drug Shortages Elevator Speech *Suggested Talking Points*

1. Why do drug shortages happen?

- a. While stock levels may vary between institutions during a shortage, shortages are problems that expand beyond a single institution.
- b. Most often drug shortages are due to manufacturing issues, including delays in acquiring raw materials or a decision to discontinue production.

2. How do drug shortages affect patient care?

- a. Drug shortages have the potential to cause patient harm.
 - i. Shortages pose barriers to providing optimal medication therapy and may delay treatment as supply is typically stored centrally.
 - ii. For example, we may know that drug X is the most effective for a given condition, but be forced to use drug Y due to limited supply of drug X.
 - iii. Risk of medication error is increased as changes are made to normal workflow and staff are less familiar with alternative medications.
- b. Drug shortages can lead to increased healthcare costs.
 - i. Changes must be made to hospital systems workflow and computer systems to reflect changes.
 - ii. For example, new barcodes may need to be added to the system and new procedures may need developed for dispensing.
- c. Share a personal example about how drugs shortages impact your work.
 - i. Example: IV fluids - forced to switch several medications to IV push, this required changing dispensing and administration procedures

3. What is the solution to this problem?

- a. Pharmacists work to identify alternative medications and alter prescribing practices where possible.
- b. ASHP Drug Resource center provides assistance to hospital pharmacies impacted by drug shortages. <https://www.ashp.org/Drug-Shortages>
 - i. Download and print [ASHP Drug Shortages infographic](#) to share with representatives and their staff members.
- c. ASHP is advocating to require manufacturers to provide more information on the cause and expected duration of shortage.