



DATE: October 8, 2024

TO: AABB Board of Directors

FROM: AABB Clinical Transfusion Medicine Committee

RE: Saline Supply Shortage

INTENDED OUTCOME

Update AABB members on the status of the saline supply shortage and potential considerations for mitigation.

BACKGROUND

The Baxter International North Cove manufacturing facility, a key producer of intravenous and peritoneal dialysis solutions, was significantly impacted by Hurricane Helene.

- USG, FDA, FEMA are working together to assess and identify mitigation efforts to reduce the impact of the closed plant.
- Baxter is still trying to access the North Cove site. Neither product in the facility nor other warehouse locations have been fully assessed in the impacted area.
- FDA assessed the national supply and has not declared a shortage; however, all orders are on allocation.
- The immediate tasks are to restore power, remediate critical issues at the plants, and put in place efforts to quickly restore production at the facility.
- FDA may expedite review and approval processes for alternative manufacturers as well as for Baxter, as necessary.
- One domestic supplier has shifted from five days/week to 24/7 production.
- Assessing US Manufacturers that have production facilities outside of the US.
- Although a small number of hospitals have indicated critical need for IV solutions, several have indicated two weeks or more of supply.

POTENTIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR MITIGATION

- Discontinuing practice of ordering “to keep open” (TKO) fluids.

- Continuing previous intravenous (IV) fluids when patients are moved to a new unit until infusion of the hanging bag is complete.
- Consider heparin-locking IV for short procedures that do not require general anesthesia and use flush syringes for medication administration.
- Consider permitting patients presenting for procedures to continue a clear liquid diet up to 2 hours before their procedure (as per ASA NPO Guidelines) to decrease IV fluid requirements.
- Discontinue post-transfusion saline flushes of tube sets unless the same tubing set will be used for a second transfusion (within four hours).
- Consider possible approaches to reducing usage, such as education and clinical decision support in the electronic health record.