NATIONAL

ESSENTIAL MEDICINE SHORTAGE

AWARENESS DAY

OVERVIEW

When Americans go to a hospital, visit a doctor or need an ambulance, they expect the drugs that they need will be on the shelf — whether to treat minimal health care needs or more urgent life-threatening conditions. But in reality, some of the most critical medicines we rely on are delayed or unavailable due to a poorly designed global supply chain that has resulted in shortages of our nation's most essential medicines.

PROBLEM

For more than a decade, drug shortages have remained a persistent challenge across the U.S. healthcare system, affecting access to essential medicines relied upon by patients, providers, hospitals, and emergency responders. Reliance on a limited number of manufacturers, many of them located overseas, combined with quality concerns, manufacturing disruptions, geopolitical instability, natural disasters, and economic pressures on generic drug production, continues to expose critical vulnerabilities in America's medicine supply chain.

SOLUTION

It is critical to national public health security that public-private partnerships are established to accelerate efforts to domestically manufacture essential medicines. The crisis calls for action from both government and industry experts to help bring an end to these essential medicine shortages.

Critically important change and transformation cannot come fast enough. A growing movement driven by public-private partnerships and forward-thinking industry leaders with bipartisan, bicameral support is committed to solving this issue for Americans today and for generations to come. However, the broken supply chain is a complex problem that no one approach can fix. It will take the effort, innovation, and collaboration of many to solve.



September 8th has been identified as the national observance day to bring awareness of essential medicine shortages and to create solutions that result in a reliable supply of high-quality medicine.

71%

of active drug shortages are life-saving sterile injectables.[1]

92%

of active pharmaceutical ingredient manufacturing capacity for U.S. medicines is located outside the United States.[2]

88%

of physicians report drug shortages have delayed treatment or forced a switch to alternative medications.[3]

$894M

is the approximate annual labor cost for hospitals responding to drug shortages, more than double the 2019 figure, plus an additional $200M spent annually on higher-priced substitute drugs.[4]

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1 USP. 2026 Annual Drug Shortages Report; 2026. https://www.usp.org/news/usp-2026-annual-drug-shortages-report-rising-discontinuations-supply-chain-risk
2 USP. Global API manufacturing capacity remains concentrated. USP Quality Matters Blog; 2026. https://www.usp.org/blog/global-active-pharmaceutical-ingredient-manufacturing-capacity-remains-concentrated-despite
3 Lubell J. Drug shortages affect 88% of primary care physicians. American Medical Association; 2026. https://www.ama-assn.org/public-health/behavioral-health/drug-shortages-affect-88-primary-care-physicians
4 Murphy A. Drug shortages decline, but strains persist for health systems: ASHP. Becker's Hospital Review; 2025. https://www.beckershospitalreview.com/pharmacy/drug-shortages-decline-but-strains-persist-for-health-systems-ashp/