

September 30, 2024

Dear Valued Customer:

In follow-up to the communication issued on September 29, 2024 regarding Baxter's North Cove, NC facility and the disruption of site operations as a result of Hurricane Helene, below is information from Baxter's Medical Affairs team regarding immediate product management and conservation actions.

Healthcare practitioners should use their professional judgment in evaluating the information in this document and assessing the needs and resources of their individual organizations.

If you have questions related to the content of this letter, please email MedInfo@Baxter.com.

Suggestions for Management and Conservation

- **Evaluate Inventory:** Review your current stock levels, expiration dates, and the distribution of IV and irrigation solutions (e.g., saline, dextrose, lactated Ringer's) and impacted medications to identify the most critical areas. Prioritize the use of fluids that are most essential for patient care.
- **Evaluate Clinical Needs:** Work with clinical teams to identify which patients are in most urgent need of impacted IV solutions, such as those undergoing surgery, critically ill patients, or those with severe dehydration or shock. You may want to consider reevaluating protocols for fluid administration to prevent unnecessary usage.
- **Identify Alternative Sources of Solutions and Medications:** Recommend the use of alternative IV fluids or solutions when appropriate, such as oral rehydration for non-critically ill patients. Consider using smaller volumes or concentrated forms of fluids, based on clinical guidelines. Consider alternative sources or formats of equivalent medications including medications with similar pharmacological actions and indications.
- **Optimize Fluid Management:** Implement evidence-based fluid management protocols to optimize IV fluid administration and minimize waste. For instance, reducing IV fluid bolus volumes for routine patients or switching to other therapies like enteral feeding. Consider fluid conservation strategies, such as reducing maintenance IV fluids in less critical patients. Consider changing medications and electrolytes to a clinically appropriate oral product whenever possible.
- **Assess Pharmacy Operational Strategies:** Consider transitioning to commercially manufactured premix medications, including multichambered parenteral nutrition bags, if available. Consider changes in the electronic health record (EHR) to allow the use of either dextrose or saline for admixture of drugs compatible with both solutions. This will help create better flexibility based upon which products are available at the time. If your institution can utilize syringe infusions pumps, consider preparing and dispensing non-IV push medications in ready-to-administer syringes to be infused via syringe pump.

- **Engage Clinical Teams:** Provide education and training to healthcare providers on managing fluid restrictions, medication and therapeutic changes and the potential risks. Regularly update all staff on the status of the shortage and any changes to treatment protocols.
- **Document and Monitor:** Maintain thorough documentation of impacted fluid and medication usage, patient needs, and any adverse effects or shortages encountered. Set up a monitoring system to track fluid and medication consumption closely and ensure transparent reporting to leadership.

Baxter is continuing to take immediate action so that we can resume production in North Cove as quickly as possible to help mitigate the effect on product supply for patients. We thank you for your partnership as we navigate this situation.

References

Suggestions for Management and Conservation. American Society of Health-System Pharmacists. Drug Shortage Resource Center, 2022. <https://www.ashp.org/drug-shortages/shortage-resources/publications/fluid-shortages-suggestions-for-management-and-conservation>