



20 – Critical Medication Shortages

(Approved, October 2014)

Medication shortages have become a common occurrence in the United States. These shortages have the potential to adversely affect treatment of patients, as doctors often are forced to use alternative drugs that are not as effective. This is a significant public health threat than can deny care to critically ill patients.

In 2011, President Obama issued an executive order (No. 13588) that was later passed into law, allowing the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) to receive earlier notification of potential drug shortages from manufacturers so appropriate measures can be taken. The American College of Osteopathic Emergency Physicians (ACOEP) endorses the current FDA policies to decrease medication shortages:

1. Drug manufacturers must provide early notification to the FDA when a shortage is anticipated.
2. The FDA should determine if other manufacturers are willing to increase production of a drug during a shortage.
3. The FDA should expedite review of New Drug Applications (NDA), as well as alternative agents.

The ACOEP recommends that all patient care facilities have in place a defined process to anticipate drug shortages and an alternative plan.