

October 11, 2024

President Joseph R. Biden  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

On behalf of the Society of Gynecologic Oncology (SGO), thank you for Administration's commitment and recent efforts to mitigate the impact of Hurricane Helene. As you are aware, damage caused by Hurricane Helene have led to a serious supply chain disruption at the Baxter facility in Marion, North Carolina, which provides intravenous (IV) and peritoneal dialysis solutions for patients, providers, and hospitals across the U.S. This disruption is particularly concerning for patients with gynecologic cancer, who often rely on IV fluids as a critical component of their surgical and chemotherapy treatment and survivorship and nutritional care.

The SGO is the premier medical specialty society for professionals in gynecologic cancer care. With over 3,000 members, including physicians, advanced practice providers, nurses, and patient advocates, we aim to raise public awareness and improve the care and outcomes of all patients with gynecologic cancer. Among our primary missions are to elevate practice standards in the treatment of these malignancies and equip our members with the tools and resources to adapt to providing cancer care in a rapidly evolving healthcare environment.

Sadly, many SGO members across the U.S. are reporting significant shortages of IV fluids at their hospitals and within their health systems, leading to significant disruptions in patient care. We understand that this disruption may continue for weeks. In the interim, non-emergent surgeries are being postponed and some centers are facing delays in life-saving chemotherapy due to limited access to IV fluids. SGO is concerned that hospitals are already rationing care in ways that may jeopardize patient outcomes, and that more may follow. Even for centers facing imminent IV fluid shortages, this situation demands swift, extensive, and costly mobilization of hospital staff, along with conservation strategies and resources to stretch existing supplies. In the most extreme cases, the lack of IV fluids hinders hospitals' ability to deliver essential health care services—whether it is performing surgery, administering chemotherapy, or providing any IV-based medications. The inability to offer even basic resuscitation or deliver critical IV therapies is a catastrophic scenario, not only for gynecologic cancer patients but for all patients requiring life-sustaining treatment.

SGO is all too familiar with shortages, as the ongoing shortage of chemotherapy drugs has been impacting cancer patients nationwide for more than a year. However, natural disasters and the growing impact of climate change will continue to pose significant threats, resulting in widespread disruptions to critical supply chains. These challenges underscore the urgent need to develop a more resilient supply chain for essential medicines and medical supplies. This includes designating certain fluids and drugs on the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) essential medicines list, invoking the Defense Production Act

to support production, and exploring the acquisition of emergency IV solutions from foreign sources. The current crisis has the potential to escalate into a far greater catastrophe, as IV fluids are essential to nearly every facet of healthcare—from surgeries to emergency care to life-sustaining treatments. Addressing these vulnerabilities is crucial to protecting our patients.

SGO recognizes and greatly appreciates that the White House, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the FDA are actively working with Baxter to stabilize and support the supply chain while the Baxter facility is brought back to full operational capacity.<sup>1</sup> We urge your administration to communicate regularly with stakeholders about the steps being taken by the Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response and the FDA including supporting increased supply to medical facilities and updates on when restoration of a full IV fluid supply is anticipated. Additionally, we urge you to consider long-term policies to mitigate the impact of future supply shortages for critical IV fluids, life-saving chemotherapy agents, and vital diagnostic dyes that have all been in critical shortage within the last two years. We welcome the opportunity to work with you to mitigate the impact on patients and ensure patients have access to life-saving services.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments. Should you have any questions, please contact Erika Miller at [emiller@dc-crd.com](mailto:emiller@dc-crd.com).

Sincerely,



Amanda Nickles Fader, MD  
SGO President



Kimberly Hoarle, MBA, CAE  
SGO CEO

cc: The Honorable Xavier Becerra, Secretary of Health and Human Services  
The Honorable Robert Califf, MD, Commissioner, Food and Drug Administration  
The Honorable Deanne Criswell, Federal Emergency Management Agency  
The Honorable Chiquita Brooks-LaSure, Administrator, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services  
The Honorable Chuck Schumer, Senate Majority Leader  
The Honorable Mitch McConnell, Senate Minority Leader  
The Honorable Mike Johnson, Speaker of the House

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2024/10/09/letter-health-care-leaders-stakeholders-impacts-hurricane-helene-secretary-becerra.html>

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries, House Minority Leader