

Supporting a Strong Healthcare Supply Chain

With a legacy spanning over 100 years, WellLink Health Alliance is a regional hospital association and advocate for healthcare providers and for the well-being of Northeast Ohio communities. WellLink GPO, our group purchasing organization partner, provides efficient procurement and discounted pricing on necessities across many categories and industries. We emphasize the importance of strengthening the domestic supply chain for essential pharmaceutical and other medical products and recognize the value of reducing reliance on international sources. Achieving this goal will require significant time due to the logistical complexity and resources involved in reorienting medical and pharmaceutical supply chains.

Each day in our region's hospitals and health systems, patients receive safe and effective care from provider teams using a wide array of pharmaceuticals and medical devices. Patients' lives depend on the ready availability of drugs and devices to respond to emergent conditions like heart attacks and infections, and other critical illnesses like cancer and organ failure. The medical supply chains for pharmaceutical products and other medical devices are highly complex, requiring hospitals to draw on domestic and international sources. These supply chains are prone to significant disruption from a wide range of factors, including transportation interruptions, natural disasters, raw materials shortages and production breakdowns.

Despite ongoing efforts to bolster the domestic supply chain, international sources still supply a significant proportion of essential medical goods. In 2024 alone, the U.S. imported over \$75 billion in medical devices and supplies, according to an analysis by the American Hospital Association of Census Bureau data. These imports include many low-margin, high-use essentials for hospital settings that are necessary for patient care. Some of these devices are single-use, designed to protect patients from infection, such as single-use blood pressure cuffs, stethoscope covers and sterile drapes. Others are small devices used ubiquitously in hospitals, such as anesthesia instruments, cautery pencils, needles, syringes and pulse oximeters. The low-margin nature of these products makes them difficult to produce within the U.S. At the same time, disruption in the availability of these devices would curtail hospitals' ability to perform life-saving surgeries and keep patients safe.

Many pharmaceuticals are also sourced from overseas. For example, U.S. providers import many cancer and cardiovascular medications, immunosuppressives, antibiotics and combination antibiotics. For many patients, even a temporary disruption in their access to these needed medications could put them at significant risk of harm, including death. Carefully planned chemotherapy treatments and antibiotic schedules are essential to giving patients the best chance of overcoming their diseases. Similarly, the provision of necessary cardiovascular medications must be continuous to preserve their cardiovascular health.

As of the first quarter of 2025, there are 270 drugs on the active shortage list. In addition to finished pharmaceutical products, the U.S. sources many raw ingredients internationally for pharmaceuticals. These raw ingredients are commonly known as active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) and are the most important components of any pharmaceutical manufacturer's supply chain. While the importance of reshoring to protect America's interests and strengthen the pharmaceutical and medical device supply chains cannot be overstated, reshoring alone will not provide the supply chain stability needed to ensure unrestricted access to necessary drugs and devices for patient care. Domestic disruptions highlight the need for a diverse supply chain that includes international sourcing.

To that end, a critical step in protecting America's pharmaceutical and medical supply chains is understanding vulnerabilities from the beginning of production to the moment a drug is administered to a patient or a device is used to deliver care. A strong and sustainable healthcare supply chain is essential for quality patient care and requires a multifaceted strategy that bolsters domestic manufacturing while cultivating trusted trade partnerships.

WellLink Health Alliance supports **S. 1784, the Mapping America's Pharmaceutical Supply (MAPS) Act**. The bill would codify a recent executive order from the administration to secure essential medicine supply chains. Additionally, it would require the Department of Health and Human Services to perform a comprehensive risk assessment of the entire U.S. pharmaceutical supply chain. The MAPS Act is an effective step toward strengthening the U.S. pharmaceutical and medical device supply chains. WellLink Health Alliance encourages the House of Representatives to take up similar legislation and look for more opportunities to encourage both onshoring and diversity in the supply chain to ensure healthcare resilience and protect U.S. national security.

WellLink Health Alliance also supports the **Medical Supply Chain Resiliency Act (S. 998/H.R. 2213)** that would authorize the President to enter into trade agreements with trusted trade partner countries to diversify sourcing for critical medical devices and pharmaceuticals, protect public health and bolster national security. The Medical Supply Chain Resiliency Act would reduce or eliminate barriers to trade and also harmonize regulatory procedures to expedite the cross-border movement of critical medical goods and create a collaboration framework to promote public and private research and development, among other provisions.

Strengthening supply chains for essential pharmaceutical and other medical products is necessary. WellLink Health Alliance supports efforts to help ensure a reliable supply of medical goods are delivered safely and efficiently to providers and patients when they need them through diverse supplier networks, while also protecting U.S. national security. Achieving this goal will require significant time and resources, given the complexity of medical and pharmaceutical supply chains, and the importance of supply chain diversity.