

Vermont Psychiatric Care Hospital Policy and Procedure		
Drug Shortages		
Effective: September 2014	Revised: September 2024	Due for Review: September 2026

POLICY

When the pharmacy department is unable to obtain drug products through normal channels, hospitalized individual therapy may be compromised. This policy describes the process for evaluating drug shortages, managing scarce resources, and minimizing impact on hospitalized individual care.

DEFINITIONS

Drug shortage: a supply issue that affects how the pharmacy department prepares or dispenses a drug product or influences hospitalized individual care when prescribers must choose an alternative therapy because of supply problems.

PROCEDURE

The Pharmacy Director or designee is responsible for investigating and providing information about potential drug shortages that may affect hospitalized individuals at Vermont Psychiatric Care Hospital (VPCH). The Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee will be made aware and may review any ongoing or anticipated plans for restricting use or rationing limited supplies.

- The pharmacy will investigate potential drug shortages by contacting our wholesaler as well as all manufacturers of the product to determine current availability. The pharmacy will work through legal channels such as the wholesaler, the manufacturer and other area hospitals to purchase supplies of the drug product, based on availability, allocation amount and usual use patterns.
- If the supply situation meets the definition of a drug shortage, the pharmacy will assess the potential effect to hospitalized individual care, considering the expected duration of shortage, assessment of current inventory and usage patterns, as well as alternative products. They will then develop a management strategy in cooperation with the clinicians most affected by the shortage. The Physician will order any medication substitution as needed.
- If the decision is made to prioritize the drug for specific hospitalized individual groups, it will be made by a multidisciplinary team using guidance from national organizations, as well as utilization trends. Clear guidelines for prioritization must be provided to assist in the evaluation of appropriateness of medication orders. The Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee will be consulted about, and may assist with, decisions to ration or restrict product to a specific hospitalized individual population.
- The pharmacy will maintain a drug shortages list. When a drug shortage directly impacts hospitalized individual care, the clinicians whose hospitalized individuals will be affected

will be notified as soon as possible utilizing VPCH personal email or other mutually agreed upon mechanism(s). The information provided will include when applicable:

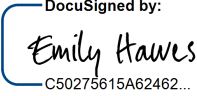
- Product affected.
- Reason for shortage
- Estimated date of product availability
- Rationing or restriction strategies
- Specific management strategies such as removing products from automated dispensing cabinets (Pyxis) or drawing up doses in the pharmacy to conserve product.
- Recommendations for alternative agents if appropriate
- Hospitalized individuals or family members shall be counseled when a drug product shortage will delay or compromise care.

The pharmacy will monitor the status of the drug shortage until the supply situation no longer meets the definition of a drug shortage.

References

American Society of Health-Systems Pharmacists’ ASHP Guidelines on managing Drug Product Shortages in Hospital and Health Systems. 2009; 66:1399-1406.

Joint Commission MM 02.01.0

Approved by	Signature	Date
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