

## STATEMENT ON PRESIDENT OBAMA'S EXECUTIVE ORDER ON DRUG SHORTAGES

Rick Pollack

Executive Vice President

American Hospital Association

October 31, 2011

President Obama's executive order to address drug shortages comes at a critical time and is welcome news for hospitals and the patients they care for. The number of drug shortages has tripled in the last six years and the shortages are affecting patient care. Hospitals are committed to providing every patient with the right care; given at the right time, in the right setting. The right drug is an essential element in that equation.

An AHA survey earlier this year found that nearly 100% of hospitals reported a shortage in the past six months. And most have rarely, if ever, received advance notification of these drug shortages. Clinicians need more notice from drug manufacturers so they have time to act to ensure that patient care is not disrupted. Hospitals are doing their best to reduce the impact of shortages by increasing inventories, buying alternative drugs and training clinical staff on how to deal with drug shortages.

The executive order is a solid step in the right direction but there is more to do to address this issue. The AHA has long supported bipartisan legislation in Congress that requires drug firms to notify FDA as soon as possible of interruptions in product supply or discontinuations. In addition, we believe that obstacles must be removed so that FDA is able to streamline approval of drugs in shortage.

We urge Congress to pass the *Preserving Access to Life Saving Medications Act* and to reauthorize the *Prescription Drug User Fee Act*, key policy changes needed to address drug shortages. The AHA will continue to work with key stakeholders to ensure that solutions to address the drug shortage issue become reality.

###