



February 11, 2011

The Honorable Amy Klobuchar
United States Senate
302 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Klobuchar:

Thank you so much for being an outstanding senator from Minnesota. My anesthesiologist colleagues at Mayo Clinic and throughout the state thank you so much introducing, S.296, the “Preserving Access to Life-Saving Medications Act.” This legislation is a critical first step in the fight to alleviate the ongoing drug shortages that jeopardize the safe care of our patients.

And while you are my personal senator, I also need to thank you on behalf of the more than 46,000 members of the American Society of Anesthesiologists. The drug shortages we have encountered during this past year have resulted in harm – even death -- to patients. Countless other near tragedies associated with these drug shortages have been averted by the skills that our anesthesiologists bring to bear every day. If enacted, your bill will help reduce the frequency and severity of these shortages, and we are very grateful.

The legislation you are sponsoring will provide additional tools to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to help manage drug shortages before they reach critical stages. It should help reduce the problems faced by patients when their surgical procedures have to be rescheduled in order to avoid undue risk from the lack of appropriate medications. Increasing the notification requirements for manufacturers, as well as requiring manufacturers to develop contingency plans for manufacturing interruptions, will help prevent drug shortages and create opportunities for alternative action to be taken prior to shortages.

We thank you for your strong leadership on this issue and look forward to working with you toward passage of this important legislation.

Sincerely,



Mark A. Warner, M.D.

President

American Society of Anesthesiologists