

News Release

HEALTH CARE GROUPS APPLAUD NEW DRUG SHORTAGES LEGISLATION

*Expanded Authority for FDA among Recommendations
from November Summit on Drug Shortages*

Bethesda, Md.— A group of leading healthcare organizations have expressed their strong support for the Preserving Access to Life-Saving Medications Act (S 296) as an important first step in addressing the complex issue of drug shortages. The legislation was introduced yesterday by Sens. Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.) and Robert Casey (D-Pa).

The organizations, the American Society of Anesthesiologists (ASA), the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO), the American Hospital Association (AHA), the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP), and the Institute for Safe Medication Practices (ISMP), are leading efforts to implement recommendations from a November 2010 Summit convened to explore solutions that would prevent patient harm and minimize disruptions in care caused by drug shortages.

The Summit included participants from health professional organizations, pharmaceutical manufacturers, and supply chain entities. Representatives of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and other regulatory agencies attended portions of the meeting as observers.

Several of the recommendations from the Summit are reflected in S 296, including expanding FDA authority to require manufacturer notification of shortages and market withdrawals and enhancing communication among health care providers and stakeholders in the pharmaceutical supply chain about the nature and expected duration of shortages. The Drug Shortages Summit Summary Report can be found online at www.ashp.org/drugshortages/summitreport.

The groups provided input to the senators as they developed the legislation and will work towards passage of S 296 as part of ongoing efforts to implement recommendations from the Summit.

About the Co-Conveners

American Society of Anesthesiologists

Anesthesiologists: Physicians providing the lifeline of modern medicine. Founded in 1905, the American Society of Anesthesiologists is an educational, research and scientific association with 45,000 members organized to raise and maintain the standards of the medical practice of anesthesiology and improve the care of the patient.

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American Society of Clinical Oncology

The American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) is the world's leading professional organization representing physicians who care for people with cancer. With nearly 30,000 members, ASCO is committed to improving cancer care through scientific meetings, educational programs and peer-reviewed journals. For ASCO information and resources, visit www.asco.org. Patient-oriented cancer information is available at www.Cancer.Net.

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American Society of Health-System Pharmacists

For more than 60 years, ASHP has helped pharmacists who practice in hospitals and health systems improve medication use and enhance patient safety. The Society's 35,000 members include pharmacists and pharmacy technicians who practice in inpatient, outpatient, home-care, and long-term-care settings, as well as pharmacy students. For more information about the wide array of ASHP activities and the many ways in which pharmacists help people make the best use of medicines, visit ASHP's Web site, www.ashp.org, or its consumer Web site, www.SafeMedication.com.

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Institute for Safe Medication Practices

ISMP is an independent, nonprofit charitable organization that works closely with healthcare practitioners and institutions, regulatory agencies, consumers, and professional organizations to provide education about medication errors and their prevention. ISMP represents more than 35 years of experience in helping healthcare practitioners keep patients safe, and continues to lead efforts to improve the medication use process. ISMP is a federally certified patient safety organization (PSO), providing healthcare practitioners and organizations with the highest level of legal protection and confidentiality for patient safety data and error reports they submit to the Institute. For more information on ISMP, or its medication safety alert newsletters and other tools for healthcare professionals and consumers, visit www.ismp.org.

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