

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 9, 2024

Mr. José E. Almeida
Chairman and CEO
Baxter International, Inc.
One Baxter Parkway
Deerfield, IL 60015

Dear Mr. Almeida,

We write to you today to express our deep concern over the growing national shortage of IV fluid impacting the state of New Hampshire. In recent weeks, Baxter International has repeatedly failed to deliver the amount of IV supplies that they have promised to our hospitals, and our frontline health care providers have reported a dwindling inventory of IV fluids that threatens to disrupt surgical services for Granite State patients. We are requesting immediate action from Baxter to provide an updated timeline for delivery of IV fluid for the state.

In September 2024, Hurricane Helene caused devastating damage at Baxter's IV fluid and dialysis solutions production facility in North Cove, NC, forcing the facility to stop manufacturing and delivering IV fluid for nearly six weeks. With a low supply of IV fluid, New Hampshire hospitals, doctors, and paramedics have found ways to extend their IV inventory, allowing most facilities to operate at full capacity during the Baxter closure. However, New Hampshire providers cannot continue to ration their limited IV fluids indefinitely. Although Baxter announced the partial reopening of its North Cove manufacturing facility on November 7, the company has been unable to provide New Hampshire providers with accurate information on what IV supplies will be delivered to the state and when.

Baxter announced in early October that providers should now be receiving 60 percent of their usual IV fluid deliveries, but New Hampshire hospitals have not seen a reliable increase in supply of certain IV products. Our state's largest hospital system, Dartmouth Health, continues to report severe shortages of some critical IV fluids, such as 3-liter bags of sterile saline. Dartmouth Health has had several instances since October where its supply of IV fluids was only enough to last for a half day absent new inventory. Similarly, Wentworth-Douglass Hospital in Dover, NH continues to receive deliveries from Baxter that contain well below the reported allocation. All hospitals across the state are evaluating dwindling IV supplies on a daily basis and delaying or rescheduling surgeries in hopes that more IV inventory becomes available.

The IV fluid shortage is directly impacting patient care. While we understand distribution is a complex process, given reports that IV fluid deliveries are unreliable, Baxter must take steps to increase the amount of IV fluid delivered to New Hampshire and improve the reliability of these shipments. This matter is especially urgent as the winter season approaches when providers need an increased supply of IV solution to meet the usual surge in complex care during the colder months. We urge Baxter to:

1. Immediately provide timely and accurate information to New Hampshire health care providers on future IV fluid deliveries, including (1) the exact types and amounts of products being delivered to their facility (2) the specific timing of each delivery; and (3) how they plan to work with distributors to ensure accurate and timely deliveries; and,
2. Communicate to our offices any steps Congress can take to facilitate accurate information, timely delivery and an extension of existing IV supply.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to your timely response.

Sincerely,



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



Ann McLane Kuster
Member of Congress



Chris Pappas
Member of Congress