

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0309

October 11, 2024

The Honorable Xavier Becerra
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Becerra:

We appreciate the Biden Administration's efforts to swiftly respond to the catastrophic damage caused across the southeast by Hurricane Helene. As you continue this recovery work, on behalf of our constituents and the health care providers who serve them, we write to urge you to continue to work with hospital and health system partners to address disruptions in the intravenous (IV) solution supply chain resulting from the hurricane-induced closure of the Baxter International plant in North Cove, North Carolina.

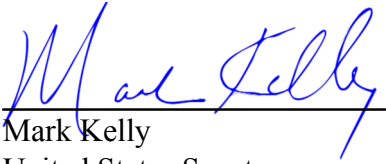
As you know, Baxter is the largest manufacturer of IV solutions in the United States. Their facility in Western North Carolina produces nearly two-thirds of the IV solution used to provide health care nationwide. As you also know, to protect from stockpiling, Baxter has instituted limits on the amount of saline solution and dextrose product hospitals and health systems are currently able to order. We are encouraged by steps taken by your agency and other federal government agencies to move product more quickly, including rebuilding physical infrastructure, working with manufacturing partners to increase supply from other sites, and providing guidance on appropriate compounding.

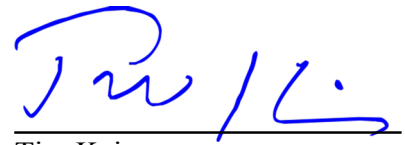
However, the uncertainty created by reduced product deliveries has led to conservation policies in health facilities across our states. After orders were recently cancelled, some providers have reported having only single-digit days' worth of product on hand, while others are utilizing over-the-counter oral hydration solutions like Gatorade—and fear reduced allocations of those alternatives as well. While providers are seeing promising results from HHS's actions so far, we must ensure this progress continues.

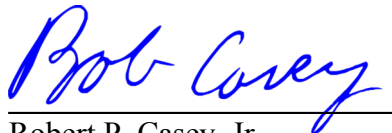
As you take the necessary steps to increase production of IV products at alternative domestic sites, facilitate the expedited arrival of additional product from overseas, and review product shelf life to consider extensions, we ask you provide clear and continuous communication to health providers on their options and the path forward as communities recover from this storm and any impact that may stem from Hurricane Milton. We also request intentional outreach to safety net, tribal, and rural providers, as well as those caring for vulnerable populations who may lack the resources to sustain prolonged shortages. Hospitals and health systems in our states are eager to work with you to protect patient care and welcome your outreach.


We look forward to working with you to ensure timely and robust communication to keep our communities healthy. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

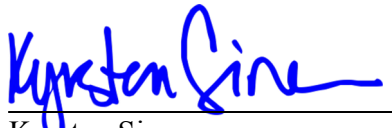
Sincerely,


Mark Kelly
United States Senator


Tim Kaine
United States Senator


Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator


Mark R. Warner
United States Senator


Kyrsten Sinema
United States Senator