

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Food and Drug Administration

[Docket No. FDA-2013-N-0124]

Food and Drug Administration Drug Shortages Task Force and Strategic Plan; Request for Comments

AGENCY: Food and Drug Administration, HHS.

ACTION: Notice; request for comments.

SUMMARY: To assist the Food and Drug Administration (FDA or Agency) in drafting a strategic plan on drug shortages as required by the Food and Drug Administration Safety and Innovation Act, the Agency is seeking public comment from interested persons on certain questions related to drug and biological product shortages.

DATES: Submit either electronic or written comments by [INSERT DATE 30 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments, identified by Docket No. FDA-2013-N-0124, by any of the following methods:

Electronic Submissions:

Submit electronic comments in the following way:

- Federal eRulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments.

Written Submissions:

Submit written submissions in the following way:

- Mail/Hand delivery/Courier (for paper or CD-ROM submissions): Division of Dockets Management (HFA-305), Food and Drug Administration, 5630 Fishers Lane, rm. 1061, Rockville, MD 20852.

Instructions: All submissions received must include the Agency name and Docket No. FDA-2013-N-0124. All comments received may be posted without change to <http://www.regulations.gov>, including any personal information provided. For additional information on submitting comments, see the “Comments” heading of the SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION section of this document.

Docket: For access to the docket to read background documents or comments received, go to <http://www.regulations.gov> and insert the docket number, found in brackets in the heading of this document, into the “Search” box and follow the prompts and/or go to the Division of Dockets Management, 5630 Fishers Lane, rm. 1061, Rockville, MD 20852.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

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SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background

On July 9, 2012, the President signed into law the Food and Drug Administration Safety and Innovation Act (FDASIA) (Public Law 112-144). Section 1003 of FDASIA adds section 506D to the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (the FD&C Act) to require the formation of a task force to develop and implement a strategic plan for enhancing the Agency's response to preventing and mitigating drug shortages. Section 506D of the FD&C Act (21 U.S.C. 356D) requires that the drug shortages strategic plan include the following:

- Plans for enhanced interagency and intra-agency coordination, communication, and decisionmaking;
- plans for ensuring that drug shortages are considered when the Secretary initiates a regulatory action that could precipitate a drug shortage or exacerbate an existing drug shortage;
- plans for effective communication with outside stakeholders, including who the Secretary should alert about potential or actual drug shortages, how the communication should occur, and what types of information should be shared;
- plans for considering the impact of drug shortages on research and clinical trials; and
- an examination of whether to establish a “qualified manufacturing partner program” as described in section 506D(a)(1)(C) of the FD&C Act.

II. Scope of Public Input Requested

Per the directive in section 506D, FDA has formed an internal Drug Shortages Task Force (Task Force) to develop and implement the drug shortages strategic plan. The Task Force is seeking comments from the public on issues related to the development of this strategic plan.

Importantly, although FDASIA refers only to a drug shortages strategic plan, we anticipate that the strategic plan will consider prevention and mitigation of both drug and biological product shortages. Accordingly, we are interested in receiving comments on these questions from all parties, including those with an interest in biological products. The Task Force is specifically interested in seeking public input on the following questions:

1. In an effort to address the major underlying causes of drug and biological product shortages, FDA is seeking new ideas to encourage high-quality manufacturing and to facilitate expansion of manufacturing capacity.
 - a. To assist in the evaluation of product manufacturing quality, FDA is exploring the broader use of manufacturing quality metrics. With that in mind, FDA would like input on the following issues: What metrics do manufacturers currently use to monitor production quality? To what extent do purchasers and prescribers use information about manufacturing quality when deciding how to purchase or utilize products? What kinds of manufacturing quality metrics might be valuable for purchasers and prescribers when determining which manufacturers to purchase from or which manufacturers' products to prescribe? What kinds of manufacturing quality metrics might be valuable for manufacturers when choosing a contract manufacturer? How frequently would such metrics need to be updated to be meaningful?
 - b. The use of a qualified manufacturing partner program similar to one used under the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA) has been suggested as a potentially useful approach to expanding manufacturing capacity and preventing shortages. FDA recognizes that there are important potential differences between the BARDA program and the use of a parallel program to address shortages.

For example, the BARDA program covers a relatively stable and limited number of products, but drugs at risk of shortage are many, may change rapidly over time, and are difficult to predict in advance. In addition, FDA does not have funding to pay manufacturers to participate in a drug shortages qualified manufacturing partner program or to guarantee purchase of the end product. With these differences in mind, is it possible to design a qualified manufacturing partner program that would have a positive impact on shortages?

- c. Are there incentives that FDA can provide to encourage manufacturers to establish and maintain high-quality manufacturing practices, to develop redundancy in manufacturing operations, to expand capacity, and/or to create other conditions to prevent or mitigate shortages?

2. In our work to prevent shortages of drugs and biological products, FDA regularly engages with other U.S. Government Agencies. Are there incentives these Agencies can provide, separately or in partnership with FDA, to prevent shortages?

3. When notified of a potential or actual drug or biological product shortage, FDA may take certain actions to mitigate the impact of the shortage, including expediting review of regulatory submissions, expediting inspections, exercising enforcement discretion, identifying alternative manufacturing sources, extending expiration dates based on stability data, and working with the manufacturer to resolve the underlying cause of the shortage. Are there changes to these existing tools that FDA can make to improve their utility in managing shortages? Are there other actions that FDA can take under its existing authority to address impending shortages?

4. To manage communications to help alleviate potential or actual shortages, FDA uses a variety of tools, including posting information on our public shortages Web sites and sending targeted notifications to specialty groups. Are there other communication tools that FDA should use or additional information the Agency should share to help health care professionals, manufacturers, distributors, patients, and others manage shortages more effectively? Are there changes to our public shortage Web sites that would help enhance their utility for patients, prescribers, and others in managing shortages?

5. What impact do drug and biological product shortages have on research and clinical trials? What actions can FDA take to mitigate any negative impact of shortages on research and clinical trials?

6. What other actions or activities should FDA consider including in the strategic plan to help prevent or mitigate shortages?

III. Comments

Interested persons may submit either electronic comments regarding this document to <http://www.regulations.gov> or written comments to the Division of Dockets Management (see ADDRESSES). It is only necessary to send one set of comments. Identify comments with the docket number found in brackets in the heading of this document. Received comments may be seen in the Division of Dockets Management between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, and will be posted to the docket at <http://www.regulations.gov>.

Dated: February 7, 2013.

Leslie Kux,

Assistant Commissioner for Policy.

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