

Abstract

Title: Intrastate Medication Shortage Communication within the United States

Objective: This study was designed to evaluate the use of medication shortage dashboards before and after the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, as well as other forms of medication shortage communication used within U.S. states.

Methods: A 29-question electronic survey was developed utilizing Qualtrics online survey software. The survey was distributed by email to state Presidents and Executive Affiliates of American Society of Health-System Pharmacists. A combination of multiple choice, select all that apply, and open answer questions were utilized. Survey questions inquired about medication shortage dashboard use within individual states prior to COVID-19, during COVID-19, and other methods of drug shortage communication used. The study was approved by the Southern Illinois University Edwardsville Institutional Review Board (study # 836) on June 24, 2020.

Results: Responses were recorded from 34/50 (68%) states. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, 3/34 (8.8%) of state responders reported having a medication shortage dashboard, 30/34 (88.2%) reported not having a medication shortage dashboard, and 1/34 (2.9%) reported being unsure. Following the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, 7/34 (20.6%) of state responders reported having a COVID-19 related medication shortage dashboard, 26/34 (74.5%) reported not having a COVID-19 related medication shortage dashboard, and 1/34 (2.9%) reported being unsure. Of states with dashboards in place, three provided the resources used to compile information for the medication shortage dashboards. Twelve states shared other forms of communication outside medication shortage dashboards utilized.

Conclusion: Many differing forms of medication shortage communication are utilized by states. Few states currently have medication shortage dashboards in place; however, the numbers have increased during the COVID-19 pandemic. As drug shortages continue to occur, particularly during COVID-19, effective communication remains an important part of health care management. Drug shortage communication is an area where continued growth is needed, and pharmacists have the potential to play an important role.