

ACCC Statement on Chemotherapy Drug Shortages

Recent years have seen alarming shortages of several anti-cancer drugs that serve as mainstays of treatment. Currently, the Association of Community Cancer Centers (ACCC) is highly concerned about the ongoing shortages of platinum-based chemotherapy agents (e.g., cisplatin and carboplatin), two medications that (individually or in combination) treat and cure a wide range of cancers, including but not limited to gastric, pancreatic, colorectal, esophageal, cervical, and ovarian. These shortages are occurring across treatment settings and geographies, including community cancer centers, hospital-based programs, and private practices. The widespread and critical nature of the shortage has already forced clinicians to choose between and among patients eligible for curative and supportive therapies. Hence, the quality of care for patients with cancer and their very lives are at stake.

“An ACCC member program recently shared how drug shortages were essentially forcing oncologists to ‘prioritize’ patients receiving curative treatment over those receiving palliative care,” said ACCC Chief Medical Officer and Deputy Executive Director, Leigh Boehmer, PharmD, BCOP. “That is not a decision any cancer care provider wants to—or should need to—make.”

Platinum drug shortages were first reported to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) on February 10, 2023.¹ In a recent survey by the National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN), released on June 7, 93% of NCCN centers surveyed reported a shortage of carboplatin and 70% reported a shortage of

cisplatin. These types of shortages are demonstrative of broader challenges with prescription drug manufacturing integrity in the U.S., stemming from production delays, unavailability of raw ingredients, and/or quality deficiencies, among other factors.

ACCC is pleased that the FDA has worked with Qilu Pharmaceutical Co. Ltd. (Qilu) and its distributor Apotex Corp. to allow for the temporary importation of cisplatin during the shortage. Only Qilu and Apotex Corp. are allowed to import or distribute Qilu’s cisplatin injection in the U.S. Qilu issued a “Dear Healthcare Professional” letter that highlights some labeling changes and clarifies certain safety questions that may arise from the importation and distribution of its product in the U.S.²

ACCC stands behind its members as they work with stakeholders across the health care system, including federal and state governments, the pharmaceutical industry, payers, cancer care team members, and patients and caregivers, to find solutions to the current shortages. The Association also supports its members’ efforts to develop longer term solutions to avoid recurrences of these and other anti-cancer drug shortages. Such life-threatening challenges to the provision of high-quality cancer care simply must not continue. ACCC is committed to partnering with our members and other organizations to aggregate experiences, resources, education, and advocacy efforts to help the cancer care community respond to this urgent challenge in the service of its patients.

ACCC Welcomes its Newest Members

Maroon Cancer Center, Cleveland Clinic Florida

Weston, Florida

Delegate Rep: Stephanie Cordero, MHA


Website: <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/florida/giving/campaign/cancer-center>

Phelps Hospital Cancer Institute at Northwell Health

Sleepy Hollow, New York

Delegate Rep: Annmarie Mulhern-Flannery,
MHA, RN

Website: <https://phelps.northwell.edu/cancer-institute>

ACCC and its managed oncology state society chapters are encouraging members to report any drug shortages to the FDA. The more reports the agency receives, the better understanding it will have of where these shortages are occurring. Shortage notifications and updates may be reported to the FDA at drugshortages@fda.hhs.gov. 

References

1. Society of Gynecologic Oncology, “SGO Statement: Carboplatin and Cisplatin Shortages,” April 21, 2023, <https://222.sgo.org/news/drugshortage>
2. Qilu Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd., Dear Healthcare Professional Letter, “Subject: Temporary Importation of CISplatin Injection with non-U.S. Labeling to Address Drug Shortage,” Published May 24, 2023. Accessed June 23, 2023. <https://www.fda.gov/media/169001/download>

Virtual Round Table Addresses Chemotherapy Drug Shortages

In June, ACCC partnered with the Hematology/Oncology Pharmacy Association and the Association of VA Hematology/Oncology to host a virtual round table to provide a unique opportunity for oncology pharmacists, healthcare professionals, and stakeholders to explore the management of drug shortages and gain valuable perspectives on the specific challenges associated with the current shortage of cisplatin and carboplatin. As the demand for effective oncology treatments continues to rise, drug shortages have become a significant concern that poses numerous challenges to healthcare providers and patients alike. Oncology pharmacists play a crucial role in addressing these shortages and ensuring optimal patient care through their expertise in drug management, therapeutic

alternatives, and communication with healthcare teams. This round table webinar brought together experienced oncology pharmacists to share their insights, experiences, and practical strategies to tackle drug shortages effectively, with a particular focus on the management of cisplatin and carboplatin shortages. Watch this roundtable online at: youtube.com/watch?v=tPHFijlooDQ.

Virtual Oncology Reimbursement Meeting: Value Based Care Best Practice to Support High-Quality Care Delivery

An expert panel discusses what cancer programs and practices need to do to effectively prepare and implement an alternative payment model. Learn best practices when developing and implementing an alternative payment model, including how you can maintain person-centered care in practice and protect your bottom line with such arrangements. ICYMI: Watch today at: courses.acc-cancer.org/products/virtual-2023-orm-value-based-care-best-practices-to-support-high-quality-care-delivery.