

Key takeaways for health system executives

# Drug shortages and labor costs:

Measuring a hidden cost of drug shortages on U.S. hospitals

The cost of labor to manage drug shortages

**\$359 million**

Cost of labor needed to manage drug shortages **per year**.

**8.6 million**

Additional personnel hours needed to manage drug shortages per year



Download the full report for additional insights:  
<http://enddrugshortages.com>

## Summary

Between March 6 and April 4, 2019, the Vizient® Drug Shortages Task Force conducted its inaugural member survey, “2019 Drug Shortages and Labor Costs: Measuring a Hidden Cost of Drug Shortages on U.S. Hospitals.”

These survey responses confirmed that drug shortages are taking a significant toll on pharmacy staffing and on the additional costs related to manage the impact of these shortages.

## Number of drug shortages reported in a six-month period



As the nation’s largest member-driven health care performance improvement company, Vizient provides network-powered insights in the critical areas of clinical, operational, and supply chain performance and empowers members to deliver exceptional, cost-effective care.

## Top 5 categories of drug shortages

1. Controlled substances
2. Local anesthetics
3. Crash cart drugs
4. Antibiotics
5. Electrolytes

## Vizient Pharmacy Solutions

The Vizient® member-focused Pharmacy Solutions support health systems and hospitals in transforming pharmacy from a cost center to a central point of integrated care through solutions that manage cost, improve quality outcomes and drive organizational performance. With an expansive portfolio of more than 12,000 contracted pharmaceutical products accessible across acute and non-acute care settings, Vizient leverages supply chain and clinical insights, experienced pharmacy consultants and therapeutic class-specific expertise to help members manage spend, optimize savings and prepare for market shifts. Serving as one united voice for members through both advocacy and action, Vizient is elevating the strategic role of pharmacy, from point of procurement to point of care.



To learn more, please contact [pharmacyquestions@vizientinc.com](mailto:pharmacyquestions@vizientinc.com)

Of the respondents that have a critical drug list, more than two-thirds are dedicating daily or weekly resources to manage this list and to assess the drugs that are crucial to the functioning of their hospital.

### Facilities with critical drug lists<sup>a</sup>

**35%**  
of Vizient members  
manage a critical  
drug list



### Key Takeaways

- The impact of drug shortages goes beyond patient care or the cost to purchase other drugs. The impact on the cost and resources related to additional labor required is significant.
- Generic injectables continue to be a primary yet critical group of drugs impacted by shortages.
- In many cases, delayed or cancelled treatments and medication errors are a direct result of drug shortages.
- Critical drug lists and other mitigation strategies are important in the management of drug shortages.

### Action steps and mitigation strategies:

- Elevate this message outside of the pharmacy by utilizing this data to draw attention of health system leaders.
- Encourage your pharmacy teams to take advantage of resources available to them that can save time, such as Vizient's mitigation perls that provide peer-reviewed recommendations for alternative therapies and Vizient's daily drug shortage alerts.
- Utilize solutions like the Vizient Novaplus® private-label program, which helps manufacturers anticipate demand and allocate production while providing a secure supply of medications at cost-effective prices.
- Focus on consistency of mitigation strategies – such as critical drug list management – across facilities.

Learn specific mitigation strategies, top classes of therapies impacted and additional key insights in the complete report.

[Download the complete report →](#)

<sup>1</sup>Ref: U.S. hospital as defined by the American Hospital Association (<https://www.aha.org/statistics/fast-facts-ushospitals>).

Ref: Definitive Healthcare "Hospitals and IDNs" database.

Ref: Vizient pharmacy program participants; data on file.

Ref: Hourly pay based on U.S. labor statistics (<https://www.bls.gov>); Vizient data on file.

A The American Journal of Health System Pharmacy defines a critical drug list as "the 10 to 20 most commonly used, life-sustaining therapies deemed most critical to patient care." [2018;75(11):816-820]