



EUROPEAN MEDICINES AGENCY
SCIENCE MEDICINES HEALTH

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Press release

EU actions to support availability of medicines during COVID-19 pandemic – update #5

The EU Executive Steering Group on Shortages of Medicines Caused by Major Events held a virtual meeting on 6 May 2020. Participation to the meeting of the Executive Steering Group was extended to all the heads of the national competent authorities (NCAs) of EU Member States to discuss additional actions by EU authorities to ensure the continued availability of medicines in Europe during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

The steering group members and the heads of the NCAs discussed if the current way in which the supply of medicines used in intensive care units (ICUs) matches the demand at national level could be further improved in view of the reported shortages of ICU medicines. The heads of the NCAs agreed to explore how national data models to forecast the demand can be shared within the EU medicines regulatory network. The first step of this project would involve sharing best practices regarding the estimation of future needs by different Member States and exploring whether joint principles for data collection and analysis could be established. The steering group members and the heads of the NCAs agreed to further discuss this project and a reasonable timeline for its possible implementation at their next meeting.

The steering group also received an update from EMA on the progress of the i-SPOC (industry single point of contact) system, the fast-track monitoring system for crucial medicines used in the context of COVID-19 that was set up by the Agency. The data collected so far through the system indicates that current or anticipated shortages of some of these medicines are mainly driven by the unexpected surge in demand and by changes in prescribing behaviours. EMA will keep updating the steering group on a regular basis as more data are gathered through the i-SPOC system in order for the steering group to discuss possible options for resolution of the reported shortages.

Notes

1. For more information on EMA's contribution to the global response against COVID-19, see [Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\)](#).
2. The EU Executive Steering Group on Shortages of Medicines Caused by Major Events is chaired by the European Commission. Its membership is made up of representatives from the European Commission, the Heads of Medicines Agencies (HMA), EMA, the chairs of the Coordination groups



for Mutual-recognition and Decentralised Procedures for both human and veterinary medicines (CMDh and CMDv), as well as risk communication specialists.

3. More information on the work of the European Medicines Agency can be found on its website:
www.ema.europa.eu

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