



*Jon Borschow, Chairman of the Board
Ronald J. Streck, President & CEO*

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**CONTACT: Laura Mesko
703/787-0000
lmesko@hdmanet.org**

Healthcare Distribution Management Association (HDMA) Releases White Paper to Address Issue of Year-End Product Shortages

White Paper Offers Recommendations to Ensure the Continuous Availability of Products

Reston, VA (December 20, 2002) - The Healthcare Distribution Management Association's (HDMA) Drug Availability Task Force (DATF) today released a white paper, "Addressing the Year-End Issue-Assuring Product Supply," to assist in establishing collaborative relationships with trading partners to assure products are continuously available. The white paper highlights the current state of the industry, presents a best practice model and offers sample communications, recommendations and solutions to address the year-end issue.

HDMA established the DATF in the fall of 2001 to examine the issues of product availability. The DATF was formed in support of HDMA's mission to secure the safe and effective distribution of healthcare products and in response to the increasing amount of product shortages in the healthcare industry. The mission of the HDMA DATF, which is composed of manufacturers, distributors and representatives from other industry organizations, is to examine product availability and to establish best practices for the industry. Its goal is to study the influences that contribute to product availability issues and to develop appropriate industry guidelines to ensure the continuous availability of products.

"HDMA and the DATF are committed to developing a collaborative solution to alleviate the issue of year-end product shortages," said Lisa Clowers, HDMA vice president, supply chain processes and technology. "We believe that the release of 'Addressing the Year-End Issue-Assuring Product Supply' completes this year's activities to help decrease the occurrence of year-end shortages." The next phase for the HDMA DATF is to produce an industry-wide white paper examining product shortages across the supply chain and recommending how the industry can collaborate to develop solutions for assuring the continuous availability of product.

"During the next phase, HDMA will seek to involve the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP) and the American Medical Association (AMA) in the development of the industry-wide white paper addressing product shortages across the board," said Clowers. "The final phase of the DATF program will be the development and release of voluntary guidelines that the industry can use to alleviate product shortage issues. Our mutual goal is to ensure product is continuously available to all patients throughout the year, providing guidance and recommendations for collaboration will help to make that possible.

For more information on "Addressing the Year-End Issue-Assuring Product Supply" or on the Drug Availability Taskforce (DATF), please contact Lisa Clowers at 703/787-0000 or visit our Web site at www.HealthcareDistribution.org.

The Healthcare Distribution Management Association (HDMA) is a leader in stimulating innovations that enhance the distributors' role in health care. Formerly the National Wholesale Druggists' Association (NWDA), HDMA secures safe and effective distribution of healthcare products, creates and exchanges industry knowledge affecting distribution management, and improves standards and business processes that influence healthcare commerce.