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September 19, 2023

Honorable Members of the City Council  
City of Los Angeles  
City Hall, Room 395  
Attn: City Clerk

COUNCIL FILE NO. 23-0489

Honorable Members:

In response to the City Council's action on June 7, 2023, regarding Council File 23-0489, the Los Angeles City Fire Department (LAFD) appreciates the opportunity to submit the enclosed report regarding the Los Angeles City Fire Department's inventory of medical supplies and pharmaceuticals. The report is hereby transmitted to the City Council for consideration.

Should you need additional information, please contact Deputy Chief Stephen Gutierrez, Training and Support Bureau (213) 978-3551.

Sincerely,

Stephen Gutierrez, Deputy Chief  
Training and Support Bureau

Attachments

## **SUMMARY**

The Los Angeles City Fire Department's (LAFD) Supply and Maintenance Division (S&M) is tasked with the procurement, distribution, and maintenance of all equipment, supplies and apparatus for the LAFD and works closely with the General Services Department (GSD) to secure vendor contracts for the Department.

The Covid-19 pandemic created unprecedented disruptions and realignment in the global supply chain and manufacturing systems. These supply chain issues continue to plague the Department in its ability to procure certain supplies, especially, medical supplies and medications. The LAFD continues to be on allocation by vendors on certain medications and is expected to continue on these allocations into mid-2024.

Supply shocks and shortages, rapid price increases, and Labor shortages continue to affect S&M's ability to maintain medical supplies and medications at appropriate levels in order to support the field.

S&M is currently working with the Fire Chief's office to get additional funding to procure available medical supplies and medications as quickly as possible and establish a six-month reserve in the S&M warehouse in order to reduce the risk of running out of critical medications in the field as additional shortages and disruptions occur. In addition, S&M, in collaboration with GSD has identified a detailed list of vendors and items needed to procure to establish this needed six-month reserve of supplies.

The Department expects that there will be significant costs as a result of the supply chain disruptions and inflationary pressures and is actively working on quantifying these costs at this time.

## **DISCUSSION**

The Covid-19 pandemic had a seismic impact on the national and the global supply chain and manufacturing systems. Prior to the pandemic, most manufacturing and supply lines operated on the concept of Just In Time (JIT) or Lean systems. This allowed companies to operate with minimal inventories at maximum output and manufacturing. This operating system was in place in the United States (US) and the major producing countries for over 20 years. The Covid-19 pandemic shocked and paralyzed this operating system and process with no full recovery to this day.

The disruption and interruption to manufacturing during the pandemic had a domino effect. Manufacturing rapidly shifted to needed supplies to fight the pandemic and the normal demand levels for other items reduced dramatically and created uneven supply in the manufacturing processes. This began a trickle effect downstream and to the end users, including Government agencies.

As the effects of the pandemic began to recede in mid-2022, the manufacturing world faced additional pressures. Demand spiked on many pre-pandemic items which created shortages in materials and manufacturers did not have enough time to shift into their pre-pandemic business operations. Given that most were based on Lean systems, many companies became insolvent and some went out of business further creating pressures as well as driving up costs of materials and supplies.

Specific to medical supplies, most global medical supplies and medications are

manufactured outside of the US. In addition, manufacturers began to focus on supplies and medications that were more profitable and stopped producing commodity priced medications. This has further strangled the medical supplies necessary to operate efficiently.

While other surrounding fire departments may not face this issue to the same extent as the LAFD, it is primarily due to the LAFD's substantial size and high volume of emergency calls they handle daily to serve their citizens, necessitating a greater supply of resources.

The Department's relationships with our vendors have been vital in navigating these challenging conditions pre and post pandemic. Although the LAFD has been placed on allocation on some of the items, we have mostly been able to procure our medical supplies, albeit at low levels.

Though many of these supply chain challenges have been resolved upstream, we still experience disruptions without any notice. The recent shortages of the medications Adenosine, Albuterol, Amiodarone, and Epinephrine Injectables are just an example of this continued challenge. S&M is actively working to stabilize our medical supply inventory by establishing a minimum of six-month cache which will give the Department some lead time as further interruptions and shortages occur.

## **CONCLUSION**

The LAFD is confident that with ongoing shifts and improvements in the supply chain systems, relationships with our vendors, and current plan in place, we will be able to reach inventory levels that will create resiliency and allow S&M to distribute needed medical supplies and prevent shortages experienced by the field.