

# EXPEDITING CRITICAL HEALTHCARE SUPPLIES THROUGH U.S. TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

*A process to prioritize the movement of pandemic and essential medical supplies through the U.S. transportation system is needed to avoid significant delays in delivering to healthcare providers*

## BACKGROUND

Unprecedented transportation delays have severely limited reliable and timely movement of medical products. This restricts the supply chain's ability to support healthcare providers responding to COVID-19 and providing essential medical services. **Transportation disruptions have become a healthcare issue.**

The medical products supply chain relies on predictable transport to communicate product availability and delivery to providers. This allows them to provide appropriate clinical patient care. **Continued delays will have negative consequences for patient care and public health.**

Demand for PPE, ancillary vaccine products and essential medical supplies continues to increase due to rising COVID-19 cases, flu season preparation and administering COVID-19 booster shots. **This demand will further strain the transportation system.**

### Transportation Delays:

Shipping Time: 2.5X longer

Port Delays On Arrival: 3X longer (1-2 week unloading delay)

Rail: 1K – 3K containers backlogged at IL rail yards

Trucking: 60,000 truck drivers needed

## HIDA'S POSITION

**HIDA supports a Critical Cargo Program that prioritizes medical supplies during the COVID-19 response and future public health emergencies.** Public and private stakeholders should be convened to identify a **fast pass** prioritization process to efficiently move product. The entire U.S. transportation system from ports to rail to trucks to small parcel carriers should be included.

## HIDA'S RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) Develop a "fast pass" system to expedite global transportation of essential medical products**
  - Use this system to prioritize critical supplies for container access and sea freight space
  - Use HTS codes to identify containers of critical supplies
  - Use existing "peel off" capability for priority handling at ports
- 2) Utilize "fast pass" with railroads, trucks and small parcel carriers**
  - Ensure first available railcar and chassis
  - Ensure necessary equipment and labor are available
- 3) Align transportation operations to support healthcare during public health emergencies**
  - 24/7 operations during a public health emergency is needed for transport of medical products
  - Develop intermodal communication plan on when and how medical products can be accessed

### Medical Products Supporting COVID, Flu & Essential Care Include:

Infection Prevention: PPE, hand sanitizer

COVID and Flu Vaccinations: needles, alcohol prep pads

Emergency Medicine: Patient monitoring equipment, IV sets

Essential Surgeries and Treatments: Correct components and sterile surgical kits