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Sam Houston State University

Andrew P. Davis

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Andrew P. Davis
Assistant Professor of Sociology
North Carolina State University
apdavis5@ncsu.edu

Introduction

The resilience of the healthcare supply chain is a crucial factor in the US's ability to respond effectively to medical crises. This resilience is being tested, particularly in the wake of natural disasters such as hurricanes, fires, and flooding – which scientists expect to worsen in the coming decades (NCEI). Disruptions in our supply system can have immediate and severe consequences, impeding the availability of essential medical supplies such as intravenous (IV) fluids, which are critical for patient care across a wide range of medical contexts. The supply chain's vulnerabilities became especially evident during hurricanes Maria (September 2017) and Helene (September 2024), when the shutdown of key manufacturing facilities—such as those operated by Baxter International in Puerto Rico and North Carolina—led to nationwide shortages. These events underscored how reliance on a few centralized production sites created systemic risks, making it clear that alternative strategies must be considered to bolster resilience. Scholars such as Chopra and Sodhi (2014) and Sheffi (2015) emphasize that over-concentrated supply chains are inherently fragile and may be highly susceptible to large-scale disruptions, reinforcing the necessity for diversification and redundancy.

This paper seeks to examine some of the structural factors contributing to supply chain fragility in the US healthcare industry and outline strategies for fortification. Through an analysis of the impact of two recent hurricanes - Maria and Helene, we will identify key inefficiencies and vulnerabilities in current systems. The discussion will focus on institutional coordination, the role of organizational theories in understanding supply chain resilience, and insights from social network research that can offer viable models for more robust healthcare logistics. Scholars such as Tang (2006) highlight the balance between efficiency and resilience, while Craighead et al.

(2007) illustrate how interconnected supply chains, though efficient, can also magnify disruptions. Additionally, we will explore policy recommendations and technological advancements that can mitigate future risks, grounding our recommendations in current research on risk management and supply chain adaptation.

The first section will explore the cascading effects of IV fluid shortages in the aftermath of these storms, explaining how disruptions at the production level create broader systemic issues. The shortage of these key resources not only affect hospitals but also influences the entire healthcare ecosystem, from emergency medical services to long-term care facilities. Economic and clinical consequences include increased costs due to emergency procurement, delays in treatment, and the necessity of rationing supplies. Research by Ivanov (2020) demonstrates how disruptions can propagate through a supply network, emphasizing the importance of anticipating vulnerabilities and ensuring redundancy in critical supplies.

The data used for this is based on a historical analysis of Hurricane Maria and Hurricane Helene. Maria's impact on the pharmaceutical manufacturing sector in Puerto Rico highlighted the risks of geographic concentration. Here, power outages, infrastructure damage, and workforce shortages significantly impeded manufacturing operations. The response from regulatory agencies, including the FDA's expedited approvals for alternative suppliers, provided some relief but was largely reactive rather than preventive. Literature on disaster preparedness, such as Pettit, Fiksel, and Croxton (2010), suggests that better anticipation and strategic stockpiling would have mitigated the crisis. This case study will illustrate both the risks and potential strategies for improving preparedness. I then examine the supply chain disruptions caused by Hurricane Helene in September 2024, focusing on the shutdown of Baxter International's facility in North Carolina. While some improvements in crisis response were

observed following Hurricane Maria, persistent vulnerabilities remained, particularly in the ability of alternative suppliers to scale production quickly. A comparative analysis of the two crises will reveal lessons learned and areas where further improvements are necessary.

Following the case study analyses, I discuss key organizational theories relevant to supply chain resilience in an era of worsening environmental risk. Additionally, I integrate insights from social network research to analyze how institutional coordination influences crisis response. A well-connected network of manufacturers, hospitals, and regulatory agencies is essential for managing supply chain disruptions effectively. The presence of structural holes—gaps in coordination between critical stakeholders—can exacerbate crises by delaying response times and reducing available options. Borgatti and Li (2009) provide a foundational perspective on how network structures influence adaptability, which will be used to examine how improved institutional communication and collaboration can enhance supply chain resilience.

Finally, this paper will propose a comprehensive roadmap for strengthening the resilience of the healthcare supply chain. Key recommendations will include diversifying production facilities across multiple regions to reduce geographic concentration risks, implementing flexible regulatory policies that allow for rapid supplier adjustments, and fostering stronger public-private partnerships to facilitate information-sharing and crisis coordination. Inventory optimization strategies will be explored to strike a balance between cost efficiency and preparedness. Additionally, emerging technologies such as blockchain and AI-driven supply chain management tools will be discussed as potential solutions to enhance visibility and responsiveness in crisis scenarios. Research on adaptation of complex supply systems will guide this discussion, emphasizing the role of decentralized decision-making in improving supply chain agility.

The goal of this paper is to give readers a comprehensive understanding of the systemic weaknesses in the healthcare supply chain and the necessary steps to build a more resilient system. The lessons drawn from past disruptions must inform institutional preparedness efforts to ensure that healthcare providers are better equipped to handle future crises. This research aims to contribute to the broader discourse on supply chain risk management and healthcare logistics by offering a multidisciplinary perspective that synthesizes operational, managerial, and network theories to address one of the most pressing challenges in modern healthcare infrastructure.

The Cascading Effects of IV Fluid Shortages

The availability of intravenous (IV) fluids is fundamental to modern healthcare systems, serving as a critical component in emergency medicine, intensive care, surgery, and routine inpatient treatment (Finfer et al. 2018). Any disruption in their production or distribution creates far-reaching consequences, affecting hospitals, outpatient facilities, emergency responders, and ultimately, patient outcomes. Supply chain disruptions triggered by hurricanes and other natural disasters have repeatedly exposed vulnerabilities in healthcare infrastructure, demonstrating how shortages of essential medical supplies can escalate into national crises. Chopra and Sodhi (2014) emphasize that proactive strategies, such as alternative sourcing agreements and optimized inventory management, can mitigate these disruptions and enhance resilience.

At the production level, IV fluid manufacturing is highly concentrated among a few major companies, with facilities often located in regions prone to natural disasters. When a key manufacturing site is disrupted, as seen during Hurricane Maria and Hurricane Helene, hospitals across the country experience immediate shortages. The closure of Baxter International's facilities in Puerto Rico, which accounted for a significant portion of the U.S. supply, led to widespread rationing and delays in medical treatments. Research on supply chain vulnerability

suggests that over-reliance on geographically concentrated production sites increases fragility (Christopher & Peck, 2004). Hospitals were forced to implement emergency conservation measures, prioritizing the most critical cases while postponing elective procedures, leading to disruptions in routine surgeries, hydration therapy, and drug administration regimens. The Society of Critical Care Medicine has urged hospitals to reassess their fluid management protocols in anticipation of future shortages, recommending prioritization frameworks, optimized oral fluid management, and enhanced inter-institutional coordination (SCCM, 2024).

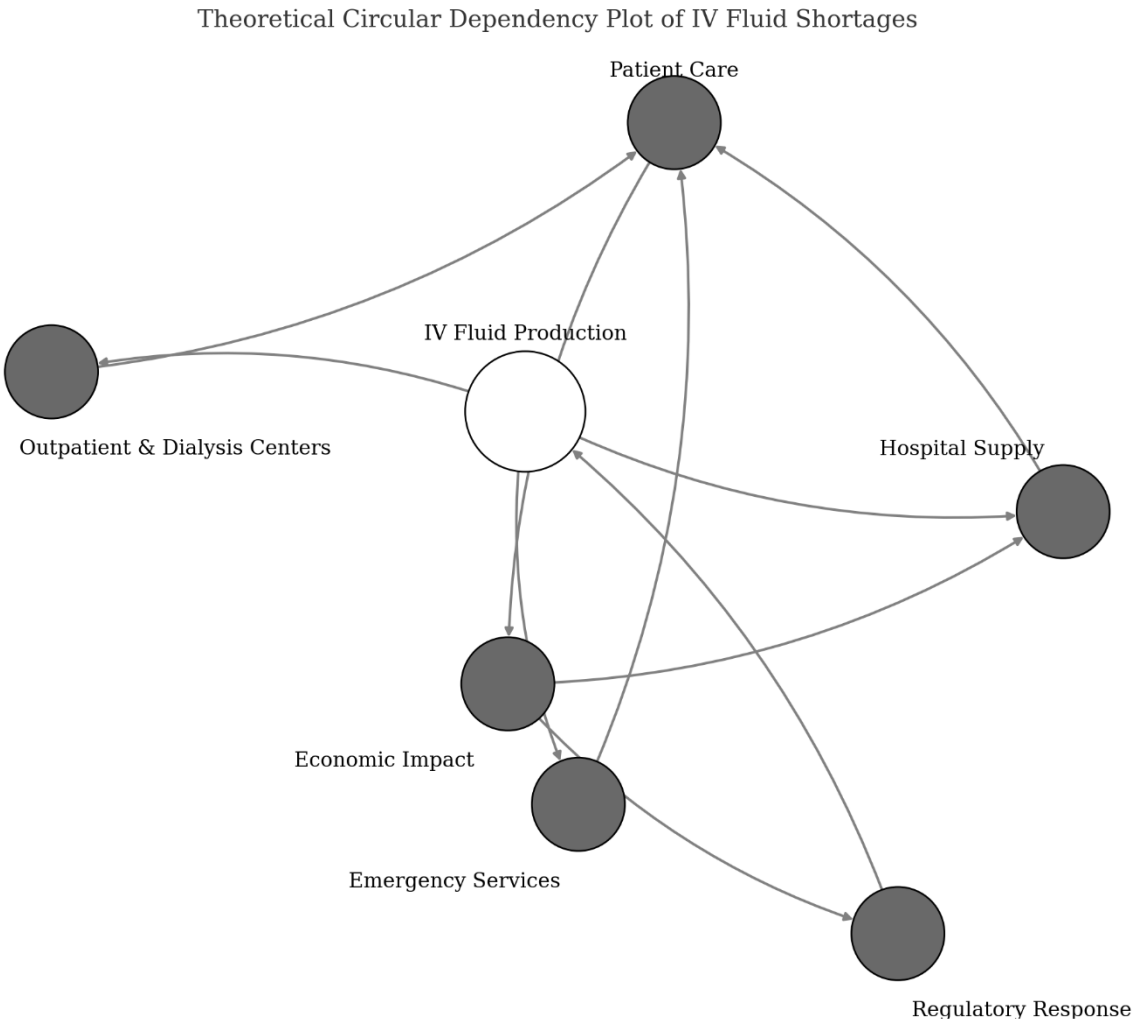
Beyond individual hospitals, IV fluid shortages create ripple effects across the broader healthcare ecosystem. Emergency medical services (EMS) rely heavily on IV fluids to stabilize patients before they reach the hospital, and when supply shortages occur, EMS teams must adjust treatment protocols, often compromising patient care. The strain extends to outpatient facilities and dialysis centers, which depend on IV fluids for life-sustaining treatments. Without adequate supply, medical providers are forced to seek costly alternatives or ration available resources, increasing operational stress and financial burden. Tang (2006) underscores that robust supply chain strategies, including flexible sourcing and preemptive stockpiling, can help prevent these widespread disruptions.

Economic repercussions of IV fluid shortages are substantial, placing immense pressure on healthcare providers and insurers. As demand outpaces supply, procurement costs rise significantly, forcing hospitals to pay premium prices for limited stock. This leads to budget reallocations that negatively impact other essential services. Pettit, Fiksel, and Croxton (2010) argue that resilient supply chains must incorporate cost-effective contingency planning to absorb financial shocks from supply disruptions. The inability to secure essential medical supplies disproportionately affects vulnerable populations, exacerbating healthcare access disparities. The

American Medical Association has reported that nearly 90% of surveyed healthcare facilities experienced severe disruptions during past shortages, with some postponing elective procedures due to inadequate IV fluid supplies (Pettit, Fiksel, & Croxton, 2010).

In addition to economic and operational consequences, IV fluid shortages pose significant regulatory and logistical challenges. When disruptions occur, government agencies such as the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) must intervene by expediting regulatory approvals for alternative suppliers or facilitating imports from international manufacturers. However, these measures often take time to implement, leaving healthcare providers in a precarious situation. Christopher and Peck (2004) argue that a lack of real-time visibility in supply chains prolongs crisis responses, reinforcing the necessity of predictive analytics and decentralized inventory systems. Fixing these vulnerabilities requires a coordinated response, as the AMA advocates for improved supply chain policies and structural reforms to prevent future shortages (Christopher & Peck, 2004; Borgatti & Li, 2009).

Figure 1.



The Theoretical Circular Dependency Plot of IV Fluid Shortages illustrates the interconnected vulnerabilities within the healthcare supply chain when IV fluid production is disrupted. At the core of the system is IV Fluid Production, which, when affected by external shocks such as natural disasters or manufacturing failures, cascades through various healthcare sectors. Hospital Supply, Emergency Services, and Outpatient & Dialysis Centers are immediately impacted, leading to resource scarcity that affects patient care. Patient Care disruptions manifest as postponed treatments, rationing of essential fluids, and increased medical

complications, ultimately straining the entire healthcare system. These challenges, in turn, create broader Economic Impacts, increasing procurement costs and financial burdens on healthcare facilities. This situation often necessitates a Regulatory Response, where government agencies, such as the FDA, intervene by approving emergency imports, fast-tracking new suppliers, or mandating supply chain adjustments. The feedback loop completes as Regulatory Responses attempt to stabilize IV Fluid Production, but such interventions often come with delays, highlighting the persistent fragility of the system. This visualization underscores the need for resilient supply chain strategies, including diversified production, improved forecasting, and coordinated institutional responses to mitigate future shortages.

The cascading effects of IV fluid shortages highlight the fragility of healthcare supply chains and the urgent need for systemic reforms. The adoption of more resilient supply chain strategies, such as multi-sourcing agreements, regional diversification, and advanced inventory management, can help mitigate the risks associated with production disruptions. Investment in predictive analytics and real-time monitoring systems can enhance preparedness and response capabilities, ensuring that healthcare institutions are better equipped to handle future crises. As Christopher and Peck (2004) and Borgatti and Li (2009) suggest, building a more adaptive and interconnected supply chain will be critical to ensuring uninterrupted access to life-saving IV fluids.

Hurricane Maria's Impact on the Medical Sector in Puerto Rico

Hurricane Maria, a Category 4 storm, made landfall in Puerto Rico on September 20, 2017, devastating the island's infrastructure and economy (Kishore et al., 2018). The storm, with winds reaching 250 km/h, caused severe flooding, collapsed roads, and led to widespread power outages (Rodríguez-Díaz, 2018). Given the high concentration of pharmaceutical facilities on the

island, the hurricane disrupted the supply of critical medical products, including IV fluids, exposing vulnerabilities in the global healthcare supply chain (Jarvis, 2018).

Immediate Disruptions to Manufacturing

The destruction of Puerto Rico's power grid was one of the most severe consequences of Hurricane Maria. With 80% of power transmission lines damaged, many pharmaceutical manufacturing plants were forced to rely on backup generators, which were not designed for long-term use (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 2018). Baxter International, one of the largest manufacturers of sterile saline solutions and intravenous (IV) bags, faced weeks of operational downtime, exacerbating preexisting shortages of these medical supplies (Yagnik et al. 2022). Hospitals across the mainland United States experienced immediate shortages, forcing providers to conserve IV fluids, delay treatments, and adopt alternative medication administration strategies (Yagnik et al. 2022).

The impact of Maria-induced disruptions extended beyond Puerto Rico, revealing the fragility of pharmaceutical supply chains. The United States relies heavily on Puerto Rico for the production of essential medications, including small-volume parenteral saline solutions, used in hospitals, emergency rooms, and outpatient care facilities (Yagnik et al. 2022). With Baxter International's manufacturing capacity crippled, hospitals scrambled to secure alternative supplies, leading to price increases and rationing. With Puerto Rico's ports and transportation networks damaged, companies faced significant delays in distributing finished pharmaceutical products to the mainland United States (Rodríguez-Díaz, 2018). The crisis underscored the dangers of over-concentrating pharmaceutical production in a disaster-prone region, sparking discussions on supply chain diversification.

Economic and Policy Implications

Hurricane Maria exposed serious vulnerabilities in pharmaceutical supply chains, prompting industry leaders and policymakers to rethink disaster preparedness strategies. One major lesson is the importance of geographical diversification in pharmaceutical manufacturing. Many experts have advocated for reducing dependency on a single region by expanding production to multiple locations, ensuring redundancy in case of future disasters.

Furthermore, the hurricane underscored the need for stronger infrastructure investments, including hardened manufacturing plants, improved backup power systems, and enhanced logistics planning. Several pharmaceutical companies have since invested in resilient supply chain technology, incorporating predictive analytics and real-time inventory tracking to better respond to future disruptions. Another crucial lesson is the role of government-industry coordination. While the FDA and the U.S. government intervened after the crisis, experts argue that proactive risk mitigation policies, such as mandatory disaster resilience plans for pharmaceutical companies, could prevent such supply chain collapses in the future. Establishing emergency stockpiles of critical drugs and medical supplies could also serve as a buffer against shortages during future disasters.

Hurricane Helene and a National IV Fluid Shortage

Hurricane Helene, classified as a Category 4 storm, struck the southeastern United States in September 2024, leaving extensive damage in its wake. Among the many disruptions caused by the storm, one of the most critical was the widespread shortage of intravenous (IV) fluids, a fundamental component of patient care in hospitals nationwide (NOAA, 2024). The healthcare industry relies heavily on a few major production sites for essential medical supplies, and the storm's impact on manufacturing facilities exposed a critical weakness in the U.S. healthcare

supply chain. Baxter International's North Carolina facility, which is responsible for a significant portion of the nation's IV fluid supply, suffered major structural damage and was forced to halt production (AMA, 2024). As a result, hospitals across the country faced severe supply constraints, necessitating emergency conservation efforts.

With Baxter International's facility unable to produce IV fluids, the effects quickly cascaded through the healthcare system. Per Baxter's own guidance based on their statement on the matter (https://ncmedsoc.org/statement-from-baxter-international-on-iv-fluids/), hospitals implemented emergency rationing protocols to preserve their existing supplies, prioritizing critical care and emergency room patients while delaying elective treatments. In many cases, oral rehydration therapy and alternative hydration methods were used as substitutes for IV administration, though these methods were not suitable for all patients (Truveta, 2024). Rural hospitals and smaller healthcare providers were particularly affected, as they often lack the stockpiles and procurement flexibility available to larger medical centers (AMA, 2024). This crisis underscored the dangers of concentrating production in a single geographic location, leaving the system vulnerable to major disruptions.

Beyond immediate supply shortages, the financial strain on hospitals was substantial. The sudden reduction in supply and increased demand led to a sharp increase in IV fluid prices, forcing hospitals to divert resources away from other critical services (AMA, 2024). Procurement teams scrambled to find alternative suppliers, but logistical challenges, including transportation bottlenecks and regulatory hurdles, delayed relief efforts (AMA, 2024). Meanwhile, secondary markets emerged, with some distributors inflating prices for IV solutions, raising concerns about product safety and oversight (The Guardian, 2024). The crisis exposed

long-standing inefficiencies in the healthcare supply chain, emphasizing the need for stronger price controls and emergency preparedness measures.

Federal agencies and manufacturers worked to mitigate the crisis, but responses were largely reactive. The FDA authorized emergency imports of IV fluids from Canada, Ireland, and the United Kingdom, temporarily relaxing certain regulatory requirements to accelerate supply replenishment (FDA, 2024). Meanwhile, Baxter International redirected production efforts to its overseas facilities, transporting emergency supplies to the U.S. through a coordinated airlift strategy (AMA, 2024). While these short-term measures provided some relief, they also highlighted the lack of long-term preparedness plans within the healthcare industry. The heavy reliance on regulatory interventions and emergency imports in crisis situations revealed the fragility of the existing system and the urgent need for system-wide reforms.

The experience of hospitals during the crisis reinforced the need for stronger disaster preparedness measures at the institutional level. Healthcare facilities with pre-existing supply agreements with multiple distributors were able to adapt more effectively, while those relying on single-source suppliers struggled to secure emergency stocks (AMA, 2024). Improved coordination between federal agencies, manufacturers, and healthcare providers would further strengthen emergency response efforts in future supply chain crises. Hurricane Helene's impact on IV fluid shortages was a stark reminder of the fragility of the U.S. healthcare supply chain. The shutdown of a single manufacturing facility triggered nationwide disruptions, affecting patient care, hospital operations, and medical costs (AMA, 2024). This crisis demonstrated the risks associated with production centralization, reinforcing the need for long-term planning and supply chain diversification (Truveta, 2024). Although emergency interventions helped stabilize supply levels, they did not address the underlying structural vulnerabilities in the system.

Moving forward, proactive planning, investment in alternative production methods, and policy-driven reforms will be essential to prevent similar crises in the future.

Organizational Theories and Strategies for Supply Chain Resilience in an Era of Heightened Environmental Risks

The increasing complexity of global supply chains has made them more vulnerable to disruptions, necessitating a strategic approach to resilience. Organizational theorists have explored various frameworks to enhance supply chain adaptability, focusing on redundancy, flexibility, diversification, collaboration, risk management, technological investment, cultural adaptability, scenario planning, and network resilience. While efficiency-driven approaches, such as Just-in-Time (JIT) inventory management, reduce costs, they also expose firms to significant risks when supply shocks occur (Sheffi, 2007, 2015). Conversely, resilience strategies often require financial trade-offs, as maintaining Just-in-Case (JIC) inventory buffers and diversifying suppliers increases costs (Christopher & Peck, 2004). This discussion explores how organizational theory informs resilience strategies, highlighting how firms can navigate the balance between efficiency and robustness, including the growing threat of climate-related disasters and the role of governments in supply chain security.

Climate Change, Natural Disasters, and Supply Chain Risk

Climate change is increasingly recognized as a systemic threat to supply chain stability, as the frequency and severity of natural disasters continue to escalate. Recent research indicates that climate-related disruptions—including hurricanes, wildfires, extreme heat, and flooding—have increased in both frequency and intensity, causing direct damage to manufacturing plants, transportation networks, and supplier hubs (Ghadge et al. 2020; Ivanov, 2020). The cases of Hurricane Maria (2017) and Hurricane Helene (2024) illustrate how extreme weather events can cripple critical production facilities, leading to cascading shortages across global supply chains

(Gereffi, 2020). Unlike conventional supply chain shocks, climate disasters are often compound risks, exacerbating existing vulnerabilities by simultaneously affecting multiple regions and overloading emergency response systems (Tang & Musa, 2011). As climate models predict an increase in extreme weather events, organizations must redesign resilience strategies to account for geophysical instability and long-term environmental change (Ghadge et al. 2020).

A crucial dimension of climate risk is the unpredictability of extreme weather events and their disproportionate impact on certain regions. Many global supply chains are heavily concentrated in climate-vulnerable zones, such as coastal industrial hubs in East Asia and low-lying manufacturing areas in South Asia, which are exposed to flooding, typhoons, and rising sea levels (Shih, 2020). The increasing volatility of seasonal weather patterns also affects agricultural supply chains, with extreme droughts reducing food production output, which in turn disrupts logistics, processing, and retail (Gereffi, 2020). Firms must recognize that climate change is no longer a hypothetical risk but a structural challenge that will reshape the global economic landscape. Addressing these risks requires a shift in both corporate strategy and government policy, prioritizing long-term environmental adaptation over short-term cost efficiency.

Geographic Diversification and Climate Adaptation

One of the central resilience strategies in supply chain theory is geographic diversification, which aims to reduce dependency on single-source suppliers or high-risk regions. Tang (2006) argues that diversification is critical for reducing exposure to environmental disasters, particularly in industries where key manufacturing centers are located in climate-sensitive zones. The global semiconductor shortage of 2021 demonstrated this vulnerability when severe droughts in Taiwan restricted water supplies for chip manufacturers, worsening

production delays (CSIS, 2022). In response, firms such as TSMC and Intel have begun relocating facilities to less climate-sensitive regions, securing government subsidies in the U.S. and Europe to offset relocation costs (Pisano & Shih, 2009). However, diversification presents logistical and financial challenges, requiring companies to navigate regulatory differences, transportation inefficiencies, and cost disparities across regions (Gereffi, 2020).

Beyond corporate-level diversification, governments play a key role in incentivizing geographic resilience by funding climate adaptation measures and reshoring critical industries. Industrial policy initiatives, such as the U.S. CHIPS Act (2022) and the EU's Strategic Autonomy Plan (2021), reflect a growing recognition that highly concentrated supply chains in climate-vulnerable regions pose national security threats (Shih, 2020). By diversifying production locations and investing in climate-resilient infrastructure, governments can help firms distribute risk more effectively while ensuring long-term economic stability (Ghadge et al. 2020). However, state intervention in supply chains must balance strategic independence with economic efficiency, ensuring that resilience-building policies do not create excessive trade barriers or stifle innovation (Javorcik, 2020).

Public-Private Partnerships for Climate Resilience in Supply Chains

Governments play an increasingly critical role in stabilizing supply chains during climate-induced crises, as private firms alone often lack the financial incentives to maintain redundancy in highly competitive markets. Public-private partnerships (PPPs) can offset the economic burden of supply chain resilience investments, ensuring that firms have incentives to build adaptive capacity without sacrificing competitiveness (Hajarath and Vummadi 2024). For example, the U.S. Defense Production Act (DPA) was used in 2021 to secure semiconductor

supply chains by funding production in climate-resilient regions, demonstrating how government intervention can help firms navigate climate risk while maintaining industrial competitiveness.

A particularly pressing policy issue is whether governments should maintain strategic reserves of critical materials—not only for medical supplies and energy resources but also for climate-sensitive commodities such as water, rare earth minerals, and lithium. As Sheffi (2015) points out, while buffer stocks help mitigate short-term crises, they require long-term financial commitment and coordination to remain effective. The challenge with strategic reserves is determining what materials should be prioritized and ensuring that stockpiles do not become obsolete or mismanaged. While some economists argue that markets should regulate supply allocation, recent climate disruptions suggest that state intervention is necessary to prevent catastrophic shortages (Shih, 2020).

Conclusion: Integrating Lessons from Hurricane Maria, Hurricane Helene, and Broader Supply Chain Resilience Strategies

As global warming accelerates and supply chain disruptions become more frequent, the need for robust, adaptable, and diversified supply chains has never been more urgent. The lessons from Hurricane Maria (2017) and Hurricane Helene (2024) illustrate how extreme weather events can cripple critical production hubs, particularly in industries reliant on geographically concentrated manufacturing such as pharmaceuticals and IV fluid production. The devastation in Puerto Rico following Hurricane Maria exposed the dangers of single-source dependency, as the shutdown of Baxter's IV fluid manufacturing facility led to nationwide shortages that overwhelmed hospitals and emergency responders. Similarly, Hurricane Helene's impact on the U.S. supply chain underscored how even domestically located production facilities remain vulnerable to regional environmental shocks, reinforcing the need for redundancy,

flexibility, and stronger public-private coordinatio. The organizational strategies discussed—redundancy, geographic diversification, industrial policy, and technological investment—are not mutually exclusive but must be strategically integrated into long-term resilience planning.

The broader implications of these case studies emphasize that supply chain resilience is no longer an isolated business concern but a national security and public health issue. Without intervention, increasing climate volatility will continue to destabilize supply networks, disproportionately affecting essential industries such as healthcare, semiconductor production, and energy distribution (Ivanov, 2021). Government-led initiatives, such as industrial policy incentives for reshoring, strategic reserves for critical materials, and public-private partnerships, will be essential in mitigating future disasters before they escalate into full-scale crises. However, resilience cannot be entirely state-driven; firms must also proactively invest in adaptive supply chain networks, leveraging real-time analytics, AI forecasting, and supplier diversification to prevent catastrophic bottlenecks. The intersection of organizational theory, supply chain risk management, and climate adaptation points to a singular conclusion: a failure to prioritize resilience now will lead to exponentially higher costs—both economic and human—in the future. Moving forward, the focus must shift from reactive crisis management to proactive risk mitigation, ensuring that global supply chains are not only efficient but fundamentally sustainable, secure, and climate-resilient.

To build a more resilient healthcare supply chain, a comprehensive, multi-faceted approach is necessary—one that combines structural changes, regulatory adaptations, and technological innovation. One of the most pressing priorities is diversifying production facilities across multiple regions to mitigate risks associated with geographically concentrated manufacturing. The disruptions following Hurricanes Maria and Helene demonstrated that over-reliance on

single-source suppliers can lead to catastrophic shortages, particularly for life-sustaining medical products like IV fluids (Gereffi, 2020). Expanding domestic manufacturing capabilities while maintaining a diverse network of international suppliers can help balance supply chain efficiency with long-term resilience. However, geographic diversification alone is insufficient—regulatory frameworks must also be adapted to allow rapid supplier adjustments and facilitate emergency imports when primary supply sources are disrupted (Shih, 2020).

In addition to structural and policy reforms, emerging technologies play a critical role in enhancing visibility and responsiveness within the healthcare supply chain. Blockchain-based tracking systems can provide real-time transparency by enabling end-to-end monitoring of medical supply shipments, reducing delays caused by fragmented information-sharing between suppliers, regulators, and healthcare providers. Likewise, AI-driven predictive analytics can help hospitals and manufacturers anticipate demand fluctuations, allowing for proactive inventory management rather than reactive crisis responses. Such tools can enable smarter stockpiling strategies, ensuring that essential supplies are available where they are needed most without excessive financial burdens. To fully leverage these innovations, collaboration between the public and private sectors is necessary to standardize data-sharing protocols and implement digital infrastructure upgrades across supply chains.

Finally, strengthening institutional coordination and decision-making structures is essential to ensuring rapid, adaptive responses to future crises. Research by Choi, Dooley, and Rungtusanatham (2001) on complex adaptive systems suggests that centralized, rigid supply chains are less resilient to unexpected shocks than decentralized, highly interconnected networks. Applying this framework, the healthcare industry should transition toward a more decentralized decision-making model, where regional distribution centers, hospitals, and emergency response

agencies have greater autonomy to mobilize resources in times of crisis. This shift requires investing in real-time communication networks and fostering multi-stakeholder collaboration between manufacturers, regulators, and healthcare providers (Borgatti & Li, 2009). By integrating technological innovation, policy reform, and institutional adaptability, the healthcare sector can better withstand future disruptions while ensuring that patients continue to receive life-saving care, even in the face of supply chain shocks.

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