



## Supply chain issues in Red Sea and Panama Canal highlighted by Healthcare Ready threat assessment

WASHINGTON, Feb. X, 2024 – An unprecedented [drought](#) at the Panama Canal in late 2023 was the catalyst for massive delays in moving cargo and trade goods — including medications and medical supplies — between northeast Asia and the United States.

A recent [threat assessment](#) issued by Healthcare Ready — a nonprofit organization that helps strengthen the U.S. healthcare system and assist communities in planning for, responding to, and recovering from disasters and disease pandemics — explains why medical goods are taking longer to arrive at their destinations.

- The Panama Canal is restricting the number of ships passing through daily and has issued higher tolls to ships that do pass.
- There are dangers looming near the Panama Canal rerouting areas in the Red Sea and Suez Canal. Previously, shippers attempting to avoid low water levels at the Panama Canal returned to alternative shipping routes used nearly a century ago through the Suez Canal and the Red Sea, only to be diverted to avoid attacks from Yemen’s Houthi rebels.

“The crisis at the Panama Canal and Red Sea isn’t just a logistical nightmare; it’s an immediate danger to our healthcare system’s lifeline,” says Julie Abrams Healthcare Ready’s associate director of programs and response. “Every moment we face reduced shipping lanes and longer waits, we’re risking lives by delaying essential medical supplies and medications. This isn’t a distant threat—it’s happening now, and it demands swift, decisive action to diversify our supply routes and bolster our defenses against these severe disruptions.”

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For more information about how delays in shipments through the Panama Canal and Red Sea can exacerbate ongoing healthcare supply chain issues, please contact Laura Perillo at [laura@shoestringagency.org](mailto:laura@shoestringagency.org) or 908-406-3413.

Special note to journalists: [Julie Abrams](#) Healthcare Ready’s associate director of programs and response, is available to serve as a subject matter expert. Please contact Laura Perillo to request an interview.

**About Healthcare Ready**

**Healthcare Ready** is a nonprofit organization established in 2007 to help strengthen the U.S. healthcare system and assist communities in planning for, responding to, and recovering from disasters and disease pandemics. It serves as a linkage point between industry, and local, state, and federal governments to help build resilient communities and safeguard patients before, during, and after public health emergencies. For more information, visit [healthcareready.org](http://healthcareready.org) or on Twitter @HC\_Ready.