Building Resilience: Preparing the Global Contrast Media Supply Chain for Growing Imaging Demand



Resilience isn't built during a crisis, it's built well before one.

Amanda Hamilton, Vice President and General Manager of Contrast Media and Injectors, GE HealthCare

As demand for contrast-enhanced imaging continues to rise, manufacturers are investing in expanded capacity, supply chain flexibility, and closer industry collaboration to support reliable access to essential imaging products.

As medical imaging continues to play an increasingly important role in diagnosing and managing disease, ensuring a reliable supply of contrast media has become a critical consideration for healthcare providers and manufacturers alike. From oncology and cardiology to neurology and emergency medicine, contrast-enhanced examinations support clinical decision-making across a broad range of specialties.

Yet meeting the growing demand for these essential products requires more than maintaining adequate inventories. According to Amanda Hamilton, Vice President and General Manager of Contrast Media and Injectors at GE HealthCare, supply resilience must begin well before a disruption occurs.

"True resilience really starts so much further upstream," Hamilton told *Applied Radiology. "It's about planning capacity ahead of that demand, having a really strong operational discipline, building flexibility into our manufacturing and supply networks, and then having that visibility across the entire network."*

Planning Today for Tomorrow's Demand

With global demand for contrast media expected to increase substantially over the coming decade, manufacturers face the challenge of expanding production capacity while maintaining the flexibility to respond to changing market conditions.

Hamilton points to aging populations and the growing prevalence of chronic diseases as important drivers of future imaging demand. However, pharmaceutical manufacturing capacity cannot be expanded overnight. New facilities and production capabilities require substantial investments in equipment, technology, regulatory processes, and highly skilled personnel.

"The decisions that we make today can't just be based on today's volumes and needs," Hamilton explained. "We have to think about where imaging demand is going to be in five or ten years from now, and then make those investments and take those calculated risks ahead of that demand."

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For GE HealthCare, that philosophy is reflected in its continued investment in global contrast media manufacturing capabilities. In 2024, the company's fill-and-finish facilities supplied more than 100 million patient doses globally[1]. Building on that manufacturing footprint, GE HealthCare is investing $138 million to expand its Cork facility, an initiative expected to add capacity for approximately 25 million additional patient doses annually once completed[2].

Hamilton describes the investment as a deliberate response to anticipated growth in demand for iodine-based contrast media and the need to strengthen supply reliability.

Building Flexibility Into the Supply Chain

While expanded manufacturing capacity is essential, Hamilton emphasizes that resilience also depends on how effectively manufacturers can adapt when unexpected challenges arise. Transportation disruptions, manufacturing issues, geopolitical developments, and fluctuations in demand can all affect product availability.

By considering how production capabilities and capacity can be managed across its facilities, the company aims to strengthen its ability to respond to changing circumstances while continuing to support customers. For imaging departments and health systems, these efforts are ultimately intended to translate into greater predictability and confidence when planning patient procedures.

"That continuity of supply supports continuity of care," Hamilton said. "That's ultimately what we're trying to protect."

Collaboration Is Essential to Resilience

Manufacturing investments are one part of a broader, shared effort to strengthen the contrast media supply chain. Hamilton emphasizes the importance of ongoing communication among manufacturers, distributors, group purchasing organizations, integrated delivery networks, and healthcare providers.

Shared visibility into changing imaging protocols, procedure volumes, and supply conditions can help manufacturers and providers alike distinguish short-term fluctuations from longer-term shifts in demand, allowing everyone to plan more effectively.

For radiology leaders, Hamilton sees supply resilience as an area where manufacturers and providers can work together, building it into routine operational planning well before any disruption occurs.

Ultimately, Hamilton believes resilience requires a shared commitment to anticipating future needs and investing accordingly. *"Resilience isn't built during a crisis, it's built well before one,"* she said.

As demand for contrast-enhanced imaging continues to grow, that long-term perspective may prove increasingly important to ensuring that imaging departments have the resources they need to deliver timely, uninterrupted patient care.

References:

1) 1. GE HealthCare data on file – Pharmaceutical Diagnostics Contrast Media Capacity and Investment, 2025. 2. GE HealthCare data on file – Cork Capacity Investment, 2025.