Bristol-Myers Squibb to Cut Jobs as HIV Patents Expire

The company is losing its exclusive rights to two HIV drugs: Reyataz and Sustiva.

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As Bristol-Myers Squibb (BMS) loses its exclusive rights to manufacture two HIV drugs—Reyataz and Sustiva—all of the pharma giant's employees dedicated to those meds will lose their jobs, reports FiercePharma.

As end-of-year generic competition looms, BMS is adjusting its HIV portfolio business. The result, according to a statement from a company spokeswoman, is that "all dedicated U.S. field sales and home office positions supporting the HIV portfolio will be eliminated." These positions include six employees at the Princeton Pike facility in New Jersey and 52 remote workers across the country.

The HIV meds that will now be available for generic manufacturing are Reyataz, a protease inhibitor (PI) approved by the Food and Drug Administration in 2003, and Sustiva, a non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor (NNRTI), approved in 1998.

Although both drugs earned great revenue in 2016, they've both been on the decline because better and newer options are available from major drugmakers like Gilead Sciences and GlaxoSmithKline. Last year, Reyataz generated $912 million in revenue compared with 2015's $1.14 billion and 2014's $1.36 billion. However, because the drug has exclusivity in the European Union and Japan, its global sales may remain intact for a few more years.

Meanwhile, Sustiva saw a decrease from 2014 ($1.44 billion) to 2016 ($1.07 billion), but $901 million of that total was from sales in the United States, which jeopardizes a majority of revenue from the drug starting at the end of this year. When Sustiva's pediatric exclusivity expires in November, generic makers will be ready to release their versions of the drug, since they've already been approved.

Click here to read about ViiV Healthcare acquiring Bristol-Myers Squibb's portfolio of HIV assets in research and development stages.

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