Indonesia Overrides Patents for HIV and Hepatitis B Drugs

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Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono issued a decree in September that authorizes his government to use patents from several large pharmaceutical companies for seven HIV and hepatitis B drugs, Reuters reports. Until recently, the media had not noticed the switch. The World Trade Organization allows member countries to override patents to protect public health. The companies affected include GlaxoSmithKline, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Abbott and Gilead. The move to generic meds should result in major cost savings for the country, which has about 310,000 people living with HIV.

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