

Press Release



Intellectual Property, COVID-19 Vaccines, and the Proposed TRIPS Waiver

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Last year India and South Africa requested the World Trade Organization waive certain intellectual property (IP) protections under the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) for COVID-19 related drugs and products, claiming the IP protections have slowed the production of and access to COVID-19 vaccines. The Biden Administration recently announced that it will support the waiver request. In a new analysis, AAF's Data and Policy Analyst Tom Lee and Director of Health Care Policy Christopher Holt contend that waiving TRIPS will do nothing to increase vaccine production and but instead will create a whole new set of trade policy challenges.

They conclude:

The proposal to waive TRIPS is based on the misperception that IP protections serve as barriers to COVID-19 vaccine production. In fact, the difficulty of scaling up production is the key challenge. Waiving TRIPS will do nothing to increase vaccine production, represents poor policy toward IP, and will create a whole new set of trade policy challenges.

A better approach is to build upon current global vaccine partnerships while ensuring that companies can secure their supply chains. Such efforts would increase access to vaccines while avoiding the potentially widespread and long-term problems associated with waiving IP protections provided by TRIPS.

[Read the analysis.](#)