Securing the First Mile

BAHM Student Case Competition 2027: creating resilient access to critical drug ingredients

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The Problem: A Fragile First Mile

China

>1/3

of U.S.-approved APIs depend on China as the sole source of at least one key starting material (KSM)

India

~1/5

of U.S.-approved APIs depend on India as the sole source of at least one KSM

Policy trigger

Aug 2025

executive order directs HHS-ASPR to fill the Strategic API Reserve and designate essential medicines

Moving factories without strengthening upstream science and capital could win the plant but lose the innovation.

Sources: BAHM 2027 case, citing analyses of the USP Medicine Supply Map; White House Executive Order, Aug. 13, 2025; Parente, Washington Examiner, May 2026

The Challenge: 18 Months to Diversify

Achievable within 18 months

+ Redirect volume to existing, qualified allied-nation facilities
+ Contract manufacturing and tolling agreements
+ Activate strategic reserves
+ Expedite FDA site qualifications

vs.

Launch now, finish later

New U.S. plants can be funded, sited, and contracted, but not running

Permits and workforce for complex chemical synthesis take years

KSMs are the most concentrated and need the longest runway

Retaliation risk from export limits or tariffs mid-transition

Near term: *friend-shore to allied capacity. Long term: launch U.S. onshoring now.*

Source: BAHM 2027 Student Case Competition, Securing the First Mile

What Teams Must Design

1 **Map the dependence**

Diagnose

Current API and KSM reliance on China and India for HHS-ASPR designated medicines

2 **Build a policy portfolio**

Portfolio

Stockpiles, tax incentives, purchase commitments, procurement reform, trade and regulatory deals

3 **Finance and govern**

Capital

Attract private capital despite thin generic margins; authority that survives budget cycles

4 **Sequence and stress-test**

0–18 mo

Milestones at 6, 12, and 18 months; effects on prices and access; retaliation and other risks

Success: measurably less single-country dependence in 18 months, with patient access protected.

Source: BAHM 2027 case, Team Task and Success Definition

Deliverables and Key Dates

1. **Written policy plan (max 10 pages)**
2. **Executive summary (1 page)**
3. **10–12 slide pitch deck**

KEY DATES

Case issued Oct 31, 2026 → **Materials due week of Jan 18, 2027** → **Finals Feb 18–19, 2027** → **Johns Hopkins, Washington, DC**

Judged on: strategic clarity · feasible roadmap · use of data · financial logic · security and public health relevance · political feasibility · presentation